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THE ITALIANS;
OR
THE FATAL ACCUSATION: C. 501

A Tragedy.

WITH A

PREFACE;

CONTAINING THE

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE AUTHOR

WITH THE

COMMITTEE OF DRURY LANE THEATRE; P. MOORE, Esq. M.P.;
AND MR. KEAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE."

[Charles Buckey]

The Stage, my Lords, and the Press are two of our Out-sentries.—
If we remove them;—if we hoodwink them;—if we throw them
in Fetters;—the Enemy may surprize us!—LORD CHESTERFIELD.
Wright's Parliamentary History, Vol. x. p. 340.

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P R E F A C E.

DRURY LANE THEATRE.

AS the following Tragedy, while in MS., excited a considerable degree of interest and curiosity, in several literary circles, I presume to give a history of it.

Early in the month of November, 1817, it was presented to the Gentlemen, forming the Committee of Drury Lane Theatre ; and accepted in a manner, that I can never reflect upon, without pleasure and pride. They immediately voted me the freedom of their house ; and promised, that my Tragedy should command the whole strength of the Theatre.

A short time after its acceptance, the Theatre closed, for three weeks ; in consequence of the death of Her Royal Highness, the Princess CHARLOTTE OF WALES. —Previous to its re-opening, Sir Lumley Skeffington, Bart., told me, that he understood, it was intended to open the house with an ORATORIO ; in compliment to the general feelings of the Public, on the late melancholy occasion : and that considerable expectation would be excited, relative to any Address, that might be delivered, previous to the commencement.

In consequence of this intimation, I wrote, at the desire of a Friend, an Address for the occasion, and sent it to the Committee of the Theatre.—It arrived too late:—many had previously been sent in ; and, among the

rest, one, written by the celebrated Author of the PLEASURES OF HOPE, and GERTRUDE OF WYOMING. The Committee, however, were pleased to honour the Author with the following Testimonial.

“ The Committee of Drury Lane Theatre present
 “ their unanimous thanks to the Author of the *Philoso-*
 “ *phy of Nature*, and *Amusements in Retirement*, for the
 “ tender of a Monody, written on the death of Her
 “ Royal Highness, the most illustrious Princess CHAR-
 “ LOTTE OF WALES; and, though it could not be adopt-
 “ ed, they desire to recognize this farther acceptable
 “ effort of genius and talents. The Author’s name being
 “ already on the List of Free Admissions,—the highest
 “ honour the Committee can bestow,—they can only
 “ add, that had they not already voted him the free-
 “ dom of their house, the tender of such a Monody
 “ as this would have been considered by them, as an
 “ appropriate occasion for conferring it. — Nov.
 “ 1817.”

Not long after the re-opening of the Theatre, this Tragedy was placed in the hands of Mr. KEAN; in order to ascertain, whether he would wish to perform the principal character. Mr. Kean read it immediately, and expressed himself so enthusiastically in its behalf, to Colonel Douglas and myself, that I apprehended no future obstacle.

The Tragedy had previously been inserted in the Bills, to be performed immediately :—an arrangement, which was afterwards altered, in order that the Committee might keep faith with Mr. DIMOND, the Author of the BRIDE OF ABYDOS :—a promise being, at the

same time, expressly given, that this Tragedy should immediately succeed.

The BRIDE OF ABYDOS was performed : and, understanding, that a COMEDY had been recommended by Mr. Kean to the Committee ; and, having frequently heard Colonel Douglas express an ardent wish for a good one ; I construed a casual conversation, I had with the Committee, into a distant wish, that the Comedy might precede the Tragedy. With this impression, I wrote the following letter :—

“ Gentlemen,

“ Understanding that a Comedy has been presented
“ and accepted ; and knowing your desire for a good
“ one to be of long standing ; and having reason to
“ think, that you would wish to bring it forward, as
“ soon as possible ; I beg leave to wave the prior
“ claim, your politeness had assured me of ; and to
“ express a hope, that no delicacy, on your part, may
“ prevent your bringing out that piece first, which may
“ be thought most conducive to the best interests of
“ the Theatre.

“ In a concern of so great a magnitude, and, there-
“ fore, of responsibility, it is the duty of every one to
“ merge little interests, for the sake of the great one.
“ My Tragedy, therefore, if it is your wish, cheer-
“ fully concedes to the Comedy.—Yours, with much
“ respect.—*February 4, 1818.*”

The Comedy was performed :—and, though recommended by Mr. Kean, who compared it to the SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL, the CASTLE OF GLENDOWER was consigned to the “ Tomb of all the Capulets.”

While this Comedy was in rehearsal, Mr. Kean mentioned, that he wished to bring out Marlowe's *JEW OF MALTA*. Many consultations were held, and the result was, that I again consented to wave my claim of priority :—the Committee and Mr. Kean entering into an express and solemn engagement, that nothing should prevent this Tragedy from appearing immediately after. At the same time, I made one important alteration, (against my own judgment), in order to harmonize with the wishes of Mr. Kean.

Towards the latter end of February I went into the country. Previous to this journey, I called at the Theatre, and requested Mr. Kean to let me take the Tragedy with me, in order, that I might revise it at my leisure. “There is no necessity for that,” returned Mr. Kean; “it will now do very well. I am perfectly satisfied with the alterations, you have made; and any minor corrections can be attended to during the rehearsals.” I said no more;—went into the country;—staid six weeks;—and then returned. Mr. Kean, in the mean time, visited Glasgow and other parts of Scotland. On his return we had many friendly interviews; and the *JEW OF MALTA* soon after appeared.

Previous, however, to its appearance, I was requested, by one of the Committee, to write the Prologue. This I thought proper to decline :—first, because I felt a reluctance to be, in any way, assisting in the revival of a Tragedy, so barbarous, and so entirely unfitted for the present age, as the *JEW OF MALTA* : but, principally, because I felt ashamed, in being acces-

sory to the cruelty of offering such an undeserved, as well as unprovoked, insult to the great body of the Jews:—all of whom took so much offence at the representation—particularly as it occurred during the week of the Passover,—that, for the whole of the remaining season, it was more difficult to recognize a JEW in the house, than even a WOMAN OF FASHION.

Orders were now given for preparing this Tragedy. The composer had directions, relative to the music;—the scenery was put in hand;—and all was going on to my entire satisfaction;—when, one evening, that I chanced to be in the Green Room, it was hinted to me, by Mr. Kean, that “the character of Manfredi was too much in his line;”—“that the Blind Man was too good;”—“that the Page would excite too much interest;”—and “that no one should write a Tragedy for that House, without making the entire interest centre in the character HE should perform.” I listened to all this in silent astonishment!—The world, perhaps, will stare; and the Tragedian may possibly deny;—but if St. Peter’s stand upon consecrated ground,—THIS IS THE TRUTH.

I related this curious conversation to a person, connected with the management, who replied, “that he, and most of the performers, were well aware of the unfortunate jealousy of Mr. Kean; and that if Miss Kelly were to perform the character of Scipio, as I wished, such was the interest she would excite, that he was certain Mr. Kean would immediately throw up his part.” I mentioned this conversation

also to a literary friend of mine,* who told me, in reply, "that he had himself sent a Tragedy to the Committee, of which Mr. Lamb was the leading member, and a letter to Mr. Kean; who had returned for answer, that unless the entire interest centered in the character, designed for him, it would neither suit his reputation, nor the interests of the Theatre, that it should be accepted."

On the morning after my conversation with Mr. Kean, I received a communication from Mr. Moore; the substance of which may be gathered from the letter, I immediately wrote in reply.

"To PETER MOORE, Esq. M. P.

"Dear Sir,

"I beg to return thanks for your communication.
 "Mr. Kean's opinion of my Tragedy has been so expressively marked, at various times, that I feel assured, he *must* perform his character with cheerfulness.
 "All parties stand pledged to me, as men and as gentlemen, to let my Tragedy succeed the JEW OF MALTA: *and no consideration, public or private, can do away an obligation, so immediate, so positive, and so constantly enforced, from day to day, by personal intercourse, for the period of many months.*
 "I know something of the critical world, and have

* Eminent in various ways!—and, if I may judge from detached passages, perhaps even destined to produce an Epic, not unworthy of being associated with some of our first poems.

“ not much fear of the result, if I am treated fairly,
 “ justly, and honourably, by every performer’s doing
 “ his duty to the establishment and myself.

“ After the time I have wasted; the expenses
 “ I have incurred; and the hopes, by which I have
 “ been entertained; I am sure, (from the extreme
 “ politeness, I have always received at your hands,)
 “ that you will excuse me, when I say, that if I am
 “ now to be prevented exhibiting a trial of skill, it
 “ will be a circumstance more extraordinary, than has
 “ yet occurred in Theatrical Management; and can-
 “ not fail, when publicly known, to have a serious
 “ effect upon the resolutions of Literary Men in gene-
 “ ral.*—*May 7, 1818.*”

Upon the receipt of this letter, a rehearsal, in the Green Room, was immediately ordered. At this meeting the performers were desired to state any objections, that might occur to them. They pointed out a few;—unimportant and frivolous, indeed, even to a ridicule! Such as they were, however, I attended to them; and in one instance, perhaps, the Tragedy derived benefit. They had no hesitation, they said, in declaring it, as their unanimous opinion, that it

* I explained this, afterwards, by observing, that it was the unanimous opinion of my literary friends, “ that if the mysterious and insidious conduct, adopted towards me, were to be publicly known, “ such would be the disgust and indignation of the more respectable “ portion of literary men, that few pieces would be offered to the “ acceptance of Drury Lane Theatre, that had not previously been refused at Covent Garden.”

was “ a beautiful poem :” but it was difficult for any one to calculate upon success, in the present capricious state of public opinion.

Notwithstanding this liberal, and, perhaps, undeserved, concession, there was an evident distaste to the Tragedy !—This distaste the members of the Committee attributed to the *strong feeling of opposition, which had so frequently been expressed to all the measures, THEY had proposed, for the benefit of the Theatre.* I was desired, therefore, to take no notice of it. The Prologue and Epilogue were called for :—two highly accomplished Ladies were so polite as to promise to favour me with both :—The parts were distributed ; and the scenery designed : and, assuredly, scenery more classical, or magnificent, has seldom been exhibited in any Theatre. It was a fac-simile of the BAY OF NAPLES.

For a long time, the greatest confusion had prevailed throughout the establishment. Hostilities between the Committee, the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, the Hon. George Lamb, and the Performers, now became public ; and every day’s experience more fully convinced me, that to permit my Tragedy to be performed, under such inauspicious circumstances, would be the height of superlative folly. A Nightmare seemed to sit upon the House ;—all was treason within ; and all was clamour without.

About this time, I met one of our most celebrated critics, under the Piazzas of Covent Garden. “ Well !” said he, “ and so Lord Yarmouth insists, that the great “ tragedian of the day shall be permitted to commit

“ suicide in KING JOHN.” — “ Where heard you that ? ” — “ Where you may hear every thing ; — from the transit of a planet, down to the march of a beetle — at Sir Joseph Banks’. Your tragedy cannot appear this season : — it is impossible. — and — are proprietors, as well as Lord Yarmouth ! They intend being at the meeting of Proprietors, the day after to-morrow ; and design to attack his lordship, for preventing your tragedy from being brought out. I have given the report, all the currency I can ; and it is undulating every where.”

Lord Yarmouth having always conducted himself towards me, in the politest and most gentlemanly manner, I thought proper to contradict a report, so entirely unfounded in truth. This I did in a letter addressed to the Editor of the Morning Post. In consequence of which, no allusion whatever was made to the circumstance at the meeting, and the report died of itself.

In the meantime, the house stood upon the brink of ruin : — the benches were deserted ; and the treasury was losing nearly two hundred pounds every night : It was prudent, therefore, to withdraw. Previous to my leaving London, I went to the theatre ; sent the actors’ parts to Gloucester Place ; and, having previously printed the whole, desired one of the performers to assist, in destroying the only MS. copy, that was left.

Not long after I had retired into the country, I received a letter from Mr. Moore. “ I thank you very kindly,” said he, “ for your letter of congratulation, on the result of the election at Coventry,

“ because I believe it to be sincere. In respect to
“ your tragedy, I regret, very grievously, that it was
“ ever allowed to be superseded by the JEW OF
“ MALTA ; because, I think it would have been pro-
“ ductive to our treasury : whereas the Jew has not ;
“ neither has RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK ; nor KING
“ JOHN ; nor indeed any thing, brought forward last
“ season by Mr. Kean. The theatre is in a strange
“ condition at present ; but re-opened it must be.
“ In the present state of affairs, it is impossible to
“ say, who will have the selection of pieces, next
“ season ; but if it depend upon me, your tragedy
“ shall, assuredly, be performed.”

“ Gloucester Place, August 15th 1818.”

Some time after receiving this letter, I returned to London : when, dining with a gentleman, intimately connected with the establishment, I learnt, that the Committee had devolved the entire charge of selecting new pieces upon Mr. Stephen Kemble ; and, that if I wished to get my tragedy performed, I should be compelled to travel the same dangerous road over again.

Upon receiving this intelligence, I called upon Mr. S. Kemble ; the result of which was, that I resolved upon depending on the Committee, and the Committee alone. Mr. Moore, however, was now gone to France ; and I resolved to publish : but Col. Douglas desired me, on no account, to do so till I had seen Mr. Moore.

Three months passed away, before Mr. Moore returned to London : upon his arrival, by his desire, as well as that of Col. Douglas, I wrote a letter to Mr. Kean : the following is a literal copy :

" *To EDMUND KEAN, Esq.*

" SIR, *Jan. 14, 1819.*

" A few days since, I enclosed to the Committee my Preface to the Tragedy of *THE ITALIANS*.

" I had so much trouble about this Tragedy, last season, that I had become almost indifferent, as to its being performed at Drury Lane Theatre at all. The Committee, however, seem to think, that it is pre-eminently worthy of such distinction; and that, if performed, it would be exceedingly productive to the Theatre. The Preface, I enclosed, they think, also, would have so wide and so permanent an effect, and awaken such an extraordinary sensation in the public mind, that, for the sake of all parties involved, they are desirous of preventing its publication, by having the Tragedy performed, as you and they had expressly engaged, last season.

" Thus stands the case.—The Committee wish to have it brought forward: and so, in fact, do I. But neither the Committee, nor Mr. Kemble, nor myself, would, on any account, permit it to be so, unless you will ardently and zealously enter into the subject, and perform the principal character with the cheerfulness and the satisfaction, that may command a successful result.

" The subject, therefore, rests wholly with you.

" This Tragedy has, as I believe you know, been in the hands of some of the first Critics of the present day:—they tell me, it is likely to succeed on two accounts. 1st, Because there is a character, which you know so well how to render effective; and 2dly,

Because there are other characters, calculated to render your own far more interesting by the decided contrasts, they will exhibit.

“ Notwithstanding this opinion, I am well aware, that no person can presume, with any degree of certainty, to foretell the actual success of any thing; either at the Theatre, or in any other of the affairs of life.

“ But let the success, or nonsuccess, be as it will, this, I believe, is certain: that if the Tragedy is not acted, after the express engagements of yourself and the Committee, the operation will be far more serious, than if it is performed and condemned.

“ You see, Sir, this subject is of more importance, than some superficial persons may suppose. It involves interests of the first magnitude to the establishment. I request you, therefore, to appoint either tomorrow, or Saturday, with any hour, you please, to meet me in the Committee-room, which will be appropriated to our especial service, that we may come to some final arrangement. Let us regard only the interests of the Theatre! If I can be convinced that it is for its interest, that I should quietly withdraw, I will do so; provided I can with propriety, and that just sense of feeling, which every man ought to entertain for his own fame and respectability. If, on the other hand, you feel disposed to resume your former enthusiasm, let us lose no time in consulting together, for the mutual benefit of all parties concerned.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Yours, &c.”

To this letter I received the following answer.—

“ SIR,

“ I know too well my duty to a liberal public, to be instructed in my conduct towards them ; nor can I bring any circumstance to my recollection, of giving any portion of that public an opportunity of accusing me, of want of ardour and zeal, in their service. I have nothing to do with the management of the theatre : if the Committee think your tragedy worthy of representation, I am the servant of the establishment, and have neither right or wish to offer any impediments; and for my own sake, shall make the most of the materials that are allotted me : further explanation on this subject is unnecessary, when the prompter sends me the character, I shall enter on its study. I am afraid in our former acquaintance, you have mistaken good wishes to you, for enthusiasm in your efforts.

“ Yours, &c. &c.

“ *January 15th.*”

“ EDMUND KEAN.”

I should have betrayed an utter ignorance of mankind, had I suffered myself to remain blind to the merits of this letter; evidently written for the purpose of publication.—As to any enthusiasm having been directed to me in person, I have only to appeal to that part of the Committee, who were in office last year.—Our manners, habits, sentiments, and opinions, too, were in such direct opposition, that it would have been impossible for Mr. KEAN to feel much for me as a friend ; though I have always felt, and always ex-

pressed, a high admiration of his talents, as an actor.—Of his respect for the public, the public are far better judges, than I can pretend to be; and, if they are satisfied, I am.—But this I will say; though in saying it, I feel conscious, that I shall expose myself to the little witticisms of a thousand little musquitoes,—that every person, capable of taking a wide view of subjects in general, and who is even only superficially acquainted with the management of Drury Lane Theatre, knows, and knows well, that though Mr. KEAN is saving that establishment with his right hand, he is ruining it with his left.—No theatrical establishment can be, in the smallest degree, prosperous, where only one description of merit is allowed to exist: and no poem ought to be dignified with the name of TRAGEDY, where all the characters but one are kept below the dramatic level; merely for the purpose of giving the principal actor an opportunity of making what is vulgarly, but technically, called “a Hit.”

Upon the receipt of Mr. Kean's letter, I paused:—for the more active portion of the Committee were by no means satisfied with it;—nor could I make up my mind, whether there would be an attempt to save or condemn.—In the meantime Miss Porter's Tragedy was in rehearsal; and as Mr. Kean was said to entertain a personal dislike of that lady, on account of some proceedings, which took place, last season, it was deemed prudent, on the part of the Committee, to proceed no farther in my affair, till the fate of that Tragedy should be decided.—What that fate was, will

best be shewn by the following extract from the Morning Herald.—

“ Feb. 15. A new tragedy, entitled *Switzerland*,
 “ was produced last night. It is the production of Miss
 “ Porter, who has attained not only success, but
 “ celebrity in the different walks of domestic and
 “ heroic novel writing. Its reception was such, that
 “ it will not be performed a second time; we will not,
 “ therefore, enter into the fable, which, moreover, it
 “ would have been extremely difficult to seize with
 “ accuracy, from the uproar that frequently prevailed
 “ during the performance. Miss Porter’s tragedy was
 “ certainly ill-adapted for the stage; but it will be
 “ some consolation to her to know, that the noblest
 “ piece of Sophocles or Shakespeare,* if represented
 “ like her play, would meet the same destiny. It
 “ would seem, as if the whole theatre had conspired
 “ against it, even to the scene-shifters. Two scenes
 “ fell flat upon the stage during the performance, and
 “ presented a strangely confused spectacle of back
 “ lights, naked machinery, and more than the bustle
 “ of a ship’s deck in a storm. But the greatest out-
 “ rage was the behaviour of Mr. KEAN. He went
 “ through his part, of course the principal one by many

* One portion of the public do not seem to have the slightest idea, that the success of a piece depends nearly as much upon the *acting*, as the *writing*! and one description of writers seem to think, that if an actor does not like his part, he is justified in sacrificing the interests of his employers, to his ambition or caprice.—These writers, in their puerile admiration of talent, seem to lose all regard to property; and all respect to feeling.—Truly may it be said, that though we live in an *age of critics*, we are far from living in a *critical age*.

“degrees, with as much slovenliness, as if he was
“merely rehearsing it. This was so palpable, that
“persons cried ‘shame!’ upon him from the pit.

“We shall leave this conduct between him and the
“public, or rather between him and his audiences,
“without observation. He knows them better than we
“do; and perhaps judges with more justness to what
“degree of deference, they are entitled. The part
“was certainly not as good as others, in which he
“plays, but in the hands of a performer, able and wil-
“ling to give it fair effect, it would have been inter-
“esting.

“There were descriptive and narrative passages,
“susceptible of being brought out with great force;
“and a scene in a dungeon between him and Mrs.
“West gave scope to talent of the first order.—Ac-
“cordingly Mrs. West, in spite of the cold and care-
“less manner of Mr. Kean, which greatly detracted
“from her efforts, was much applauded for bursts of
“strong and true passion.”*

* The following observations are extracted from the CHAMPION.

“Miss PORTER’s new tragedy, *Switzerland*.—As for KEAN’s perfor-
“mance of what should have been the hero—perhaps a greater insult
“was never offered to an indulgent audience—or a more unqualified
“abuse of the prerogative of favouritism. We have it, from unde-
“niable authority, that Miss PORTER affirms that scarcely any part of
“her language was by him delivered: that he spoke, as it were, what
“came uppermost; and it is even added, that Mrs. GLOVER complained,
“that his inaccuracy perpetually put her out. Whether this be true, to
“its full extent, we do not pretend to answer; but there was certainly
“throughout the whole, all the embarrassment of an imperfect rehear-
“sal. The public, it seems, have shewn some part of their sense of

I was present at this unequalled scene.—As soon as the Play was over, I went round to the other part of the Theatre, to speak to Mr. Moore.—I found him in the Anti-Committee-Room, conversing with a Gentleman, whom I found afterwards to be a Friend of Miss Jane Porter.—“Well,” said Mr. Moore, “what think you of this?”—“The only reply, I can give you, sir,” said I, “is, that I *withdraw my tragedy immediately.*”

On the next day, I called upon the Manager; and withdrew the Copy. On Thursday I waited upon Mr. MOORE, at his house in Gloucester Place, and upon Col. DOUGLAS in York Place, Baker Street; where I read to them the following Letter.

“Mr. KEAN’s conduct on this occasion, by leaving him to play *Hamlet* to empty benches:—but we must speak out a little more plainly. The interests of the proprietors—and what is more, of the drama,—must not be sacrificed, with impunity, to the whims and caprices of any man. Mr. K. it is true, for the want of a better, stands at the very head of his profession; and if he enjoyed his eminence with discretion, we should be happy to swell the chorus of his reputation. But if he will suffer no other merit, among actors, to appear beside him on the boards; no production of authors to be accepted or to succeed, that does not make his character *the exclusive object of attraction*; and no wish or promise of managers to be fulfilled, that does not chime in with his ambition to shine, not only superior, *but alone*, it is high time for criticism to look to the other side of the picture: and Mr. K. may assure himself, that there are still faults enough to be pointed out in his elocution and acting, to place, without discolouring or exaggeration, even his very best characters in a much less favourable point of view, than they have generally been regarded by an indulgent public.”

“ *To the Committee of Drury Lane Theatre.*

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ When you were pleased to accept my Tragedy, you promised to bring it forward immediately, and to support it with the whole strength of the Theatre. Mr. KEAN, too, promised me the best assistance of his powerful talents.

“ This pledge, I understand, is now at last about to be redeemed.—The redemption comes too late !

“ The scene witnessed, the other evening, at the representation of Miss JANE PORTER’s Tragedy, can never be forgotten. It forms an epoch in Theatrical History : and the name of Mr. KEAN must ever be pronounced, with indignation, by all admirers of those prides of civilized life,—elegant and accomplished women.

“ The conduct of Mr. KEAN, on that occasion, exhibited such a contemptuous disregard to the common decencies of society, that I scorn to be in any way obliged to him !

“ Miss JANE PORTER is nothing to me :—I only remember having once passed a very agreeable evening in her society :—that is all the personal knowledge, I have of her : but her character is well known to be estimable ; and her talents, as a writer, are universally acknowledged. That she has not been able to write a Tragedy is no great matter of disgrace ; seeing that the Art appears to be entirely lost.—But to wound,—deliberately,—the feelings of such a Woman, and that, too, before one of the most brilliant audiences, ever assembled at a Theatre, surely could not have proceeded from a man of courage !—It is,

indeed, so gross, that language is powerless, when it would presume to visit it with commensurate condemnation.

“ You may, Gentlemen, continue to suffer the establishment of Drury Lane Theatre to become a martyr to Mr Kean’s ambition and caprice, if you please;—I shall have nothing more to do with him!—Therefore, with every sentiment of respect towards you, individually, I beg leave to withdraw my *Tragedy of the ITALIANS* entirely from the Stage.

“ I am, Gentlemen, &c. &c.”

“ Feb. 18, 1819.”

Upon reading this letter, Mr. MOORE requested me to call at the Theatre, the next day. This I accordingly did; and understanding that the Committee were engaged in conversing with the Manager, having no great cause to expect any thing from an interview, I requested COLONEL DOUGLAS to lose no time in presenting my letter to the Committee:—and having done so, I returned home, without waiting for any reply.

And now,—liberal and gentle reader,—let me presume to bespeak your favour, not only for the tragedy in general, but for the characters of *Albanio* and *Scipio* in particular. The plot was an exceedingly difficult one to arrange: since it exhibits three groupes of characters, all involved in the same interest, and all depending on the same result. It is managed, also, in such a manner, that, I believe, the catastrophe

is never once foreseen. As to the language, conduct, and sentiments, they must be tried by the acknowledged laws of good taste; I leave them, therefore, to the indulgence of the critical reader. But for the characters of ALBANIO and SCIPIO, I claim, with all their faults, the merit of an entire originality. That of SCIPIO I leave to speak for itself:—but that of ALBANIO having experienced some opposition in the Green Room, I think proper to observe, that I refused to turn him, either into a MANIAC or a MONSTER! Having, in the first instance, designed to exhibit a noble mind, partially in ruins, I could not permit myself, so far to forget all propriety of keeping, as to draw him in the conclusion, *savage, relentless, and remorseless!*

Nothing could have been more easy, than to have executed this. But what a solecism in characteristics! and what a barbarism in taste! The character would have lost what little interest it possesses; nature would have been outraged; and the harmony of the whole entirely destroyed.

Some ACTORS regard nothing but the opportunity of displaying their own peculiar talent; and having only a knowledge of stage effect, they are weak enough to suppose, that stage effect necessarily embraces plot, character, and sentiment; and that it ought to be the beginning, the middle, and the end, of dramatic composition.*

* Nothing surprised me more, during my occasional visits to the Theatre, than to observe the utter CONTEMPT,—I had almost said

When a COMEDY, or an OPERA, is announced for performance, there is little comparative sympathy in the public mind. But, on the announcement of a TRAGEDY, there is a vibration of interest, from one end of the town to the other. Who can presume to brave an ordeal, such expectation implies, without a strong sensation of awe?—None but the vainest, or most impudent of mankind!—For to exhibit a Tragedy is to summon many of the best, wisest, and most celebrated men of a country, to witness a contention between glory and defeat.

A good TRAGEDY, in all enlightened ages, has been esteemed, next to an EPIC, the most difficult of all mental operations;—from the time of Aristotle to that of Quintilian;—thence to the days of Longinus; and lastly to those of Johnson, Beattie, and Blair. To aim at tragic distinction, therefore, is a presumption of no ordinary stamp;—and I bend before the reflection, such a sentiment naturally implies. But, having once commanded the courage to write one, is it to be endured, as a recompense for exertion, that men—wholly insensible to the finer operations of the

HORROR,—with which any thing like POETRY was alluded to.—“ Stage effect, sir;—Stage effect:—nothing will do but Stage effect!—God help the man, that writes Poetry for the Stage! for even the critics will tolerate nothing but stage effect.”

Stage effect is, assuredly, solicitously to be attended to. Its effect upon the vulgar is undeniable. And yet I cannot refrain from thinking, that an overweening desire of administering to this puerile appetite,—so foreign to the national character,—has contributed, in no slight degree, to the present degraded state of the Drama; and, therefore, to the effect of saddling this Theatre with a debt of more than £80,000.

mind—shall presume *officially* to assert, that, with success upon the stage, good writing has little or nothing to do?—Is it to be endured, that, to conciliate the duty of a favourite performer, tragedy must be martyred into a MONODRAME?—or is it to be endured, that, for the sake of conciliating the least enlightened part of an audience, the most delicate touches of character, and the finest meltings of the heart, are to be tortured into EXTRAVAGANCE, or degraded into PANTOMIME?

To aspire with humility is the privilege of us all.—I have exercised my birthright.—Should I succeed, Ambition will be satisfied;—and should I fail!—What is the utmost, a WISE MAN will suffer himself to say?—That I have dared to aspire; but that I have been wronged:—the result has been unfavourable; but it is a result easily to be anticipated in an ART, which the world is unanimous in believing is almost totally EXTINCT.

C. B.

London.

PREFACE

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

IMMEDIATELY upon the publication of this Tragedy, so great a sensation was excited in the public mind, that Mr. KEAN was obliged immediately to reply.

If the indignation of the public had been excited, in the first instance,—to describe the disgust, which pervaded all ranks of society, upon the appearance of his letter, in the morning and evening papers, would be impossible! It was conceived and written in a manner so entirely beyond all precedent, that it is literally impossible, I can consent to degrade these pages with it. I am writing at a moment, in which that letter is in the vivid recollection of the public, and that public will, no doubt, appreciate the value of the omission to the future fame and almost entire existence of Mr. KEAN.

The following was the reply, I sent to the Editors of the morning and evening papers.

“SIR—Observing a letter in your paper of this morning, signed EDMUND KEAN, I beg leave to state, that I shall wait a short time to see whether it was written by Mr. KEAN or not. I have still too good an opinion of Mr. KEAN to suppose that it was. It is impossible that such language can have proceeded from the first TRAGEDIAN of the day. If, after two or three days, Mr. KEAN does not disown it, I shall naturally con-

clude that he *did* write it; and answer it in a manner, I hope, at least, worthy a gentleman to write, and a gentleman to read."

" *March 18th, 1819.*"

No disavowal appearing in the papers on the Saturday, I thought it my duty to reply without another day's delay.

" SIR—MR. KEAN has not disowned the letter; I am, therefore, reluctantly obliged to believe, that it emanated from himself; rather than from one of those enemies, who, conscious of their own insignificance, are ever active in their malice against celebrated characters. In fact, I really thought, that some one had assumed MR. KEAN's name, for the purpose of doing him the short and little injury of a day;—instead of which it appears to be his own;—and the injury must last for years!

" Circumstantial evidence, MR. EDITOR, is, sometimes, far better than positive. MR. KEAN knows,—and every one must know,—that I cannot, by any association, have *positive* proof of what passed, many months ago, in *private* conversation. But the following extract from a newspaper of this day furnishes such a fortunate commentary on my text, that, I think, no argument will be esteemed necessary to prove, at least, the *probability* of my statement.

" I have stated in the preface to *the Italians*, that a gentleman having sent a letter, relative to a Tragedy he had written, to MR. KEAN, MR. KEAN returned for answer, that unless the entire interest centered in the character designed for him, *it would neither suit his reputation nor the interests of the Theatre, that it should*

be accepted. This assertion Mr. KEAN *denies* ; and yet it does most unfortunately happen, that the very gentleman, who told me this, has, in a journal of this day* given the following statement.

‘ The letter sent to Mr. KEAN indicated, that there were two characters in the piece, as it then stood, either of which might be so written up, as to render it the principal ; and Mr. KEAN was requested to say which of the two he would prefer, that it might be altered accordingly. Mr. KEAN, *without waiting to see the MS.*, wrote back, ‘ *unless the character allotted to me is the chief object of the Play, it will not be consistent with my reputation, or the interest of Drury Lane Theatre, to accept it.*’ Now the *chief object* was to make a good Play ; and the story required, that the three female and two of the male characters, should be such as would require good acting ; though the author was prepared to give conspicuous prominence to which-ever of the latter Mr. KEAN might most affect.’

“ If, after this confirmation of what I have asserted in one instance, Mr. KEAN should still deny the substance of our conversations, I shall think myself justified,—much against my will,—in putting him to a test from which his better judgment must recoil. And yet, surely the man, who is not to be believed upon his word, is not to be believed upon his *oath* !

“ Hitherto, in the midst of many difficulties and injuries, I have been fortunate enough to command a considerable portion of personal respect ; and I am proud

to say, that—to the best of my belief,—I have never lost a single FRIEND. But I give public notice to all my friends,—numerous and respectable as they are,—that I shall have a contempt for any one of them, who may, hereafter, shake me by the hand, if I do not come successfully out of this controversy. And I now call upon the more active portion of the SUB-COMMITTEE of last year, not only to lose all friendship for me, as a man, but, for the sake of public justice,—for the interests of the Proprietors of the Theatre,—and out of respect to the acknowledged talents of Mr. KEAN,—I call upon them instantly to come forward and convict me publicly of a falsehood, if I am wrong in stating; that Mr. KEAN, previous to his journey into Scotland, gave a distinct and positive pledge, that nothing on his part should prevent my Tragedy from succeeding *The Jew of Malta*;—and that too, *without any reference to compassion*.*

“That Mr. MOORE, when he found the conduct of Mr. KEAN was operating to my disadvantage, might, *two or three months afterwards*, plead the great expenses I had been put to, and the loss of time and money I should sustain; if,—after the solemn pledges that had been given,—my Tragedy should not be performed, is very possible. For having long been in the habit of reading SENECA and BOETHIUS, I felt no shame in confessing to Mr. MOORE;—nor do I now in publicly confessing to the world,—that, from several persons not keeping their engagements with me, my truly excel-

* Mr. KEAN modestly says, “Mr. P. Moore excited with some ability my personal compassion for Mr. BUCKE; in consequence of which I undertook to act in his play.”

lent wife, my children and myself were, for the time, in great comparative want !

“ From the second month of my marriage, up to the moment in which I am writing, I have been visited with such a series of afflictions, as are, I think, scarcely to be paralleled in the annals of private life!—But I am too proud to excite even the sympathy of the public; much less the *compassion* of Mr. KEAN. I am, also, too sensible of the beautiful advantages of adversity to repine;—though it would be miraculous, did I not sometimes feel impatience and disgust.

“ Mr. KEAN, I understand, is occasionally in the habit of doing generous actions to persons of his own profession; but, for him to presume to the consequence of exercising compassion towards me would have been a subject for my ridicule, were I not so far advanced in the knowledge of human nature to know, that *ridicule is the weapon of degenerate minds*.

“ By the more active portion of the Sub-Committee, I, of course, mean PETER MOORE, Esq. Member for Coventry, and Colonel DOUGLAS, of York Place, Baker-street. These gentlemen are of high consideration in the country, and I call upon them, as Men, and as Gentlemen, to do that justice to Mr. KEAN, which I should wish, were I placed in Mr. KEAN's situation, to have administered to myself. *Should they be silent,—their silence must, of course, be construed to my benefit.*

“ Mr. KEAN states, in his unfortunate letter, that when he read my *worst of all bad Tragedies*, the only feelings it excited among the performers were *uncontrollable laughter* ! Now, this is either a curious fact, or an

alarming accusation. I am, therefore, resolved, that the public shall know the actual truth or untruth of this assertion; and I call upon Mr. RAE, Mr. POPE, and Mrs. GLOVER,* to state, *publicly, in a body, and with as little delay as possible*, whether they did, or did not, commit that most disgraceful *outrage* on private feeling, of which Mr. KEAN so roundly has accused them! If they did, the world will have a sure criterion by which to judge of *them*; if they did not, something better than my assertions will be afforded to the world, by which they may judge the veracity of Mr. KEAN."

" *March 21, 1819.*"

My answer appeared in most of the Morning Papers of Monday, March 22d. It brought the public mind to a climax of indignation, beyond any thing of the kind, that had ever been known in the annals of Theatrical experience! In the park,—in the drawing rooms of the nobility and the wealthy,—and in the parlours, devoted to the comforts of the less elevated portion of society,—a sympathy was awakened; such as it must ever delight my soul to remember; and such as my children must, hereafter, rest upon with satisfaction and delight. Mr. KEAN was called upon to make an immediate apology to that public, who were pleased to conceive itself insulted by the injury I had sustained; and by the outrage, that had been offered to my feelings.

An apology was made!

This apology, in the estimation of many persons, was

* The excellent Mrs. BARTLEY and Mr. WALLACK are in America; but I request them to take the earliest opportunity of favouring me with their testimony likewise.

not deemed sufficiently explicit ;—an opposition, therefore, to the proceeding in the tragedy of Brutus manifested itself on Mr. KEAN's appearance on the following night. The account of this transaction, published in the Morning Herald, will give this part of my subject an authenticity, of which I willingly avail myself.

“ A strong disposition to compel Mr. KEAN to make a more ample apology to the public, and to the author of *The Italians*, was manifested in several parts of the house, last night, at the rising of the curtain. It was not, however, persevered in ; and it gradually subsided into a few murmurs, which were heard, from time to time, during the performance. In candour and justice we must confess, that, in our humble opinion, Mr. KEAN's apology was sufficient ; so far as it regarded the insult, which he offered to the public, in the publication of his letter. As to the insult, which he has given to the literature of the country, by his whole conduct towards Mr. BUCKE, no apology should be demanded for it ;—because none can be adequate.

“ To men of literary talent, and of that high spirit, to which eminent talent is a natural and a becoming appendage, we have one advice to give—‘ never write for Drury-Lane Theatre, so long as the present system continues ; you but waste your noble energies ; and subject yourselves not only to disappointment, but to insult.’

“ It has been suggested to us, that if matters were managed in a conciliating tone, Mr. KEAN might give *The Italians* a trial before the public. In the first place, we do not believe, that Mr. KEAN is possessed of the magnanimity to offer such an atone-

ment to the author. In the next place, we are authorised to say, *that if he did offer it, the author would not accept it.*

“For the rest, the public will be pleased to bear in mind, that MR. BUCKE’S letter still remains unanswered. All points in that letter must, therefore, be considered as matters of authentic and true record; because the persons, most interested, have not proved the contrary.

“If any one doubt the merit of this author’s tragedy, he has only to read it; and he will find that the beauty and simplicity of the poetry,—the great moral purpose of the catastrophe,—the originality and strength of the principal characters,—as well as their variety, and,—above all,—their aptitude for dramatic representation, would, in all probability, have crowned *The Italians* with perfect success on the stage. In the closet it will survive, at least, the memory of MR. KEAN.”

It would seem to betray a want of feeling, on my part, if I did not take this opportunity of endeavouring to express the gratitude of my heart to the public in general, and my private friends in particular, for the unexampled interest, that has been exercised in my favour. But what *can* I say?—Language has power to describe all the *material* objects of the Universe: but it has neither power nor influence to depict those delicate and delightful emotions, which all can feel, and all imagine; but which the powers even of Milton himself were inadequate to describe!

C. B.

London, March 24, 1819.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN :

ALFONSO, King of Naples.

FONTANO, a Nobleman (*blind*).

SCIPIO, Fontano's Guide, (*an Improvisatore*).

ANGELO, in love with Fontano's Daughter.

PROPERTIO, Angelo's Friend.

MANFREDI, a Nobleman.

CAVALLO, a repenting Instrument of Claudia
and Manfredi.

SCIOLTO, an Officer.

ALBANIO, in arms against his Country. (Mr.
KEAN).

SPALATRO,	}	Albanio's Officers.
CARLO,		
MARCO,		
POLYDORE,		

WOMEN :

ANGELINA, Fontano's Daughter.

CLAUDIA, Alfonso's Mistress.

AGNES,	}	Attendants.
MARCELLA,		

Officers, Soldiers, a Woodman, &c. &c.

SCENE—the Bay of Naples.

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THE ITALIANS;
OR
THE FATAL ACCUSATION.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Alfonso's Tent.*

ALFONSO and CLAUDIA.

ALF. WERE the time still more urgent, I would
pause.

League with a man so worthless, as Albanio?
I think, I know Fontano's humour better!
Join with a man, who wars against his country?
The mere suspicion is a flagrant wrong!

CLAU. Infatuated man!

ALF. (*Impatiently.*) I've known him long!
Were he intent upon a royal crown,
Would he consult Albanio for his means?
No!—he would choose an instrument more noble,

To build the structure of his fortune with.

CLAU. A bad intent requires a worthless agent!

ALF. He's had an army at command so long;
Has raised so many from a low estate;
Conferr'd so many favors on his friends;
That tools, like these, in such advent'rous cause,
With threats, and promises, and dubious words,
He'd model to his desp'rate purpose.—No! —
—And where's your proof?—In your accusations,
I learn not that, which most would prove the fact,
That he has tamper'd with my body-guard.

CLAU. He *has* been tampering with thy body-guard.
I wish Manfredi were but here to prove it!
He tells me, he has letters in possession,
Which place the fact beyond the power of doubt;
Letters, that bear Fontano's sign and seal!

ALF. Letters, that bear Fontano's sign and seal?
Fontano's letters?—Let me see them.

CLAU. Why?
Shouldst thou see them, some wild insidious doubt,
Some feeble thought will raise some weak resolve,
Till doubts, and weak resolves, will end in ruin.

ALF. This language seems too strong for truth.

CLAU. ——— Ah!—no!
Thou know'st, he has so strong an empire o'er thee,
Thou wilt not trust the evidence of sight!—
—But in the struggle for pre-eminence,
Thou'lt be the first to feel, though last to see.—
Stay—there's Manfredi.—How the idiot creeps!
Mark—how he starts, and falters in his walk!
He sees the danger, and his mind's disturb'd.

Enter MANFREDI.

ALF. Signor Manfredi!—I'm but ill prepared,
To bear a treason from Fontano.—Where?
Where is thy proof, in evidence of guilt?

MANF. My liege!—This paper will command conviction. (*Gives the letter.*)

ALF. (*reads.*) It bears his sign:—There is no truth
in man!

I loathe my nature!—'Tis Fontano's hand!

CLAU. (*aside.*) The poison operates!

MANF. (*in answer, aside.*) Hush!—To think is dangerous!—

ALF. (*reads.*) “To Signor Ursino, Captain of the
“Guard.—I received thy letter by the messenger,
“'Tis well!—I thank thee, for thy continued offers of
“service. These offers I will repay, not with thanks
“only, but with substantial rewards.”—(*About to tear
the letter.*)

CLAU. ——— Read the whole!—
The evidence is yet to come.—

ALF. ——— Enough!—
I've read enough to prove Fontano's guilt!
—Yes!—'tis his hand:—it is the traitor's hand!

(*Reads.*) “All that depends on me is ready. Al-
“banio, too, informs me, that his troops are well pre-
“pared.—The king totters!—and I am on the rack of
“impatience.—Meet me to-morrow, at St. Michael's.”
“Thine faithfully, but impatiently,

“FONTANO.”

And I am all impatience, my good Signor,

To give thy treachery its deserved reward !
But tell me, Signor, by what happy chance,
Thou gain'st possession of this paper.

CLAU.

Ah !

Let us hear that ; thou didst not tell me that.—

MANF. I've lately mark'd a strange, mysterious, air,
In this good instrument, Ursino.—When
Doubt and wild daring towards high exploits
Combine in one, unequal to the hazard,
A mean suspicion is engendered, which
Never sits easy on the man, that wears it.—
Such did I mark in him ; and, therefore, mus'd
For many a night, upon Ursino's change.
At length, one evening, as returning home,
Through the long pillars of St. Michael's aisle,
I saw Fontano and Ursino there.
I marvell'd much !—For I had long observed
A striking coolness, that accorded ill
With such mysterious courtesy and friendship.

ALF. It look'd suspicious !

CLAU.

Yes ! indeed it did.

MANF. At length they rose ; and walking slowly on,
I heard Fontano whisper to Ursino,—

“ No fear there is of that :—I know the room,

“ In which Alfonso sleeps !”—On which they parted.

As I returned to where they had been sitting,

I found this paper, which Ursino dropt.

ALF. Ye gracious powers ! I would ye had ordain'd
Me some lone shepherd, that amid deep glens,
And cloud-capt mountains, watch their bounding flocks !
Would I'd been taught to fell the sturdy oak ;

To till the soil, or prune the purple vine :—
Yea !—to learn any thing, however mean,
Vile and ignoble :—e'en to watch the goat,
Browsing o'er herbage on a snowy heath,
Rather than guide the vessel of a state !—

CLAU. How many a man would wreck the world to
do it !

ALF. So many humours to consult withal !
So many interests to combine and guard !
So many factions to control and guide !

CLAU. A noble science !

ALF. Yes !—for those, whose hearts
Long have been steel'd with tempered coats of mail !

CLAU. (*impatiently.*) Fontano—

ALF. Yes ! The state demands him :
Do with the traitor, as becomes the danger :
Yet spare his life.—I once esteem'd and lov'd him :
Remember that, when justice pleads for vengeance.
(*To Claudia.*) Nay—do not speak !—I tell thee, spare
his life ! [Exit.

MANF. Life ?—Yes !—His life with pleasure we will
spare ;

Only to curse him with a heavier fate !

CLAU. Signor Manfredi ! Tell me, tell me how—
—How shall I thank thee, as becomes my state ?
But what ?—what more ?—Oh, speak !—why lookst
thou thus ?

MANF. I would advise, that thou attend the king.
Let him not weigh the matter too minutely.
The hand ! the hand ! 'tis not Fontano's hand !

Therefore, to let him meditate too long
Were unsound policy.

CLAU. Indeed it were.
And yet the plot commands a sure success! [Exit.

MANF. I hope so too!—Alfonso's mistress!—well!
[Looking after her with contempt.

Enter CAVALLO.

CAV. What?—musing still, Manfredi?

MANF. Thou art welcome!

CAV. Signor, I hither came to be so.

MAN. Well—
Then thou art doubly welcome to my heart.

CAV. I'd ask one question of thee.

MANF. Speak, I charge:
Yet commune softly. Well: thy question?

CAV. Whence—
Whence has arisen the practised Claudia's hate
To wise Fontano?

MANF. Woman!—woman!—Ah!
Tis well thou'rt made with such materials, or
Manfredi ne'er had seen a day like this!

CAV. I thought she lov'd him; and would fain have
placed
Alfonso's crown upon his head.

MANF. Away!—
He is not far from Venice, who is walking
On the Rialto. Times will change, my friend;
And so will passions. (*whispering.*) He refused her love!

CAV. Indeed!

MANF. Yes!—on the faith of man!—ah, more!

He did not frown, or seem averse alone ;
He scorn'd her, Sir, I tell thee :—she's a woman !
And will that sex submit to scorn and insult ?
—He's but a fool, who does not know as much.

CAV. Now then her conduct, which to me has
seem'd
- So wild, and so mysterious—

MANF. Is explain'd !
Yes ! yes ! it is so : and my hate, thou know'st,
(Without intelligence from me) is bile,
Form'd by the opposition, he has raised,
To my advancement in Alfonso's court.
—The gentle Claudia has another cause—

CAV. Not more effective than the last ?

MANF. Her son,
(Born of a youthful lover) has been charged
With several crimes against the public morals.
This youth Fontano has advised the king
To supersede in his command ; and doom
To partial banishment !

CAV. And this she wisely
Charges Fontano's hate with ?—

MANF. What so likely ?
The boy deserv'd his fate, though :—but, Cavallo,
Let us not waste the time thus.

CAV. Thou hast gain'd
The end and summit of thy hopes at last ?

MANF. No !—no !—Cavallo.

CAV. Why what now, good Signor ?
Is not Fontano fettered to thy wish ?
Is not thy rival, Angelo, at length

Banish'd the city?—what then would'st thou more?

MANF. These are most true! but these are not
enough!

I must complete my vengeance. I have done
Little—nay nothing; if I do no more
Than this —

CAV. Done nothing?

MANF. No!—by this right hand!

The deed, which we have planned to execute,
This coming night, shall not complete my hope!
Claudia would, doubtless, stop at this; but I—
Hast seen the beauteous Angelina?

CAV. No!

MANF. (*whispering.*) The lovely fair one bends be-
neath my power!

I will inflict such vengeance on Fontano;
And on his daughter—

CAV. On his daughter?

MANF. Yes!

CAV. Thou lov'dst her once!

MANF. I did so, good Cavallo;

Marry and do!—

CAV. Then why extend revenge
To one thou lov'st?—

MANF. Because I hate the father
More than I love the daughter. Hatred is
The master passion of the two: and can I
Ruin his hopes, his happiness, and pride,
More than by her dishonour?

CAV. Dost thou not
Intend to marry Angelina then?

MANF. No !—I do not !—But wherefore trifle thus ?
Meet me, this evening, near Fontano's prison ;
The eager Claudia will reward thee well !

CAV. (*Aside as he goes out.*) I loathe already this
detested trade ! [Exit.

MANF. (*Looking after him with suspicion.*) I fear he
is but half a villain yet !

Thou hast so often thwarted my designs,
Abhorr'd Fontano, that my nature loathes thee.
Loathe thee ?—Ah ! worse than I abhor Albano !
This day beyond, you'll see the sun no more !
Look at it well, while yet the time remains ;
For never shalt thou see it set again.
No !—never—never—shalt thou see it more !
This fatal dust I'll throw into thine eyes ;
And then will lead thee to the neighbouring wood,
Poor ; blind ; deserted ;—and accost thee thus :—
“ Go—wander where thou wilt ;—and where thy feet
“ Tread the green sod, oh ! may the green sod wither.”
[Exit.

SCENE II.

An Olive Grove, with a ruinous edifice in the back-ground.

Enter ANGELINA, attended by AGNES.

ANGELI. Heaven sheds its mercy upon those, good
Agnes,
Who pity the unfortunate.—Then tell me, tell me—
Why to this ruin I am brought ?—Oh Heaven !
My senses are bewilder'd by this mystery.

AGNES. I am not hard hearted, Signora Angelina, though I may sometimes appear so :—and one day, perhaps, I may tell you all, I know of the matter ; which, heaven knows, is little enough.—At present, I dare not do any such thing.

ANGELI. But, my sweet Agnes ; yes, thou knowest, there must be

Something in this, thou never canst approve !
My father gave me to the guardian care
Of Signor Paulo ; with the strictest charge,
To guide me safe to Venice. We had travell'd
Scarce five short leagues, when, from the public road,
We turn'd into a forest.—Then we journeyed
Through the lone windings of a darksome glen,
Re-echoing with hoarse cataracts ;—and came,
What time the moon was waning in the west,
Silent and awe-struck, to this ivied ruin.
Tis now five days—But do, my sweetest Agnes,
Say, why I'm hither brought ?—I pray thee, tell me.

AGNES. The Signor will come tomorrow, Signora, and then he will tell you himself.

ANGELI. The Signor ?—what Signor ?—who is the Signor ?—speak !
Is it Albanio ?—Tell me, who it is.

AGNES. I dare not tell you, Signora. The Signor will tell you himself.—Have patience till tomorrow comes.—I pity you, I am sure, from my heart. But I cannot do, what I dare not do.—But why will you not listen to the warbling of these birds ?—I love music, Signora. Do you not love music, too, Signora ?

ANGELI. Oh ! *(weeping.)*

AGNES. Her sighs and her tears really do go to my heart, so, that I know not what I shall do.—She has neither ate, nor drank, these two days !

ANGELI. Agnes !—

AGNES. Signora !—

ANGELI. Think, my good Agnes, think how hard
 'twould be,

Were thy dear father suddenly overwhelm'd
With dire misfortunes :—If thy lover rov'd
An exile from his native city ;—and thyself
Taken, like me, unknowing, to this ruin——

AGNES. I am afraid I must tell her !—and yet, if I do, what will become of myself ?

ANGELI. Come, my good Agnes !—Let us to yon garden.

There let us sit upon a bank of flowers,
Or 'neath the scented shade of eglantine,
And tell me all thou know'st !—There's my sweet
 Agnes.

Ah !—now I love the very name of Agnes.

Come—let me take thine hand.—

AGNES. What shall I do ?—The Signor told me not to say. If I did, he said, I should live to repent it all the days of my life.

ANGELI. Repent !—Oh ! no.—Thou never canst
 repent

A virtuous deed ; Oh ! never—never !—No—

Not if thou live—e'en for a thousand years !

Come then ;—There—lean thine arm on one,

Who fain would love thee as a daughter ;—come !—

Enter ANGELO and PROPERTIO.—The latter with a lute in his hand.

ANG. Here let us sit.—I'm weary !—What a life
An exile leads !—

PRO. Nay—be not melancholy.
Manfredi lives a far worse life, than thou,—
I would not feel the anguish of his heart,
For all the universe.—Come—cheer thee up
We are not far from Angelina now.

There—take this lute—

ANG. It is no time for music !

PRO. Nay, I request thee—

ANG. Music is design'd
For happier spirits : [*Takes the lute.*

Ah ! the world—the world
Must needs be cruel, since I loathe my lute.

[*Tunes a wild flourish.*
I could not draw one rich, harmonious, note,
Were it to gain an empire ! [*Returns the lute.*

PRO. I have done !—

ANG. Thou art the noblest of the sons of friend-
ship !

For often hast thou cheer'd my sinking heart,
When care has weighed my anxious spirit down.

PRO. Nay—nay :—It ill becomes thee to indulge,
In such deep draughts of melancholy thought.
I well remember, when,—in love with nature,—
We've wander'd oft within the forest wide,
That screen'd thy father's castle, thou wert wont,
For hours, to loiter near the mossy brook,

That murmur'd music down the deepening glen.—
Fair nature then, in all her wild display,
Shot rapture through thy frame.—Each wood, each
vale,

Each torrent, rushing from high cataracts,
Then had their graces and sublimities; but now!—

ANG. 'Tis true!—But when we've mixt with men,
and felt

The influence of their passions, it excites,
In our disgust at them, distaste for Nature.

PRO. It seems to have that influence upon you!
For e'en yon woods, whose very leaves are sacred,
Nor e'en yon mountains, towering up to heaven,
Call forth one note of holy admiration.

I wonder much!—Why!—e'en the setting sun,
(Sublimest image of eternal glory!)

Colours yon clouds with golden tints in vain!

ANG. Of late, Propertio, I have drunk too deep,
In sorrow's bitter cup!—Yon glowing sun
Ne'er smiled on one, so lovely and so fair;
So fruitful in all virtues of the heart;

And so abounding in the gifts of mind,
As good Fontano's daughter.—

PRO. Lovelier far
Than fancy e'er can paint!

ANG.—Where is she now?—
Perhaps the victim of Manfredi's love!

Oh!—Angelina!—Thou art doom'd to ruin!—
Thrilling with horror in the midst of shame;
Unless kind heaven take pity on thy tears!

PRO. And heaven will do so,—or I'm much deceived !

Didst thou not say, that, near this woody spot,
The ruin stands, in which thy fair-one weeps.

ANG. Yes !—In a ruin hid with ivy :—there
Manfredi purposes her destiny.—

PRO. Then let us—

ANG. Meet the hated monster there ?

I've planned it so !

PRO. Then whence this gloomy mood ?

ANG. Fontano !—Oh my friend !—Fontano's lot
Is yet more melancholy far than mine !—

PRO. I've heard the dreadful tale ; and, hearing,
dropt

The tear of tenderest sympathy !—yet since—

But what is this ?—A ruin !—Is it here ?

Can it be here, that Angelina dwells ?

ANG. This is the spot !—Oh !—Fortune, thou'rt
my friend.—

Tread lightly !—List !—come ;—let us to yon wood,

And meditate the rescue.—Then thou may'st

Return to save Fontano's house from ruin.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*Alfonso's Tent.*CLAUDIA—*Sola.*

CLAU, ODISIOUS Fontano !—how my heart detests thee!

What ?—Scorn my love ?—Refuse a proffer'd crown ?
Counsel the king to listen to the charge
Against my only son ?—A charge, which doom'd
That son to banishment !—I'll bear no more !

[Enter Cavallo.

Speak !—Speak !—Cavallo—Is the deed perform'd ?

CAV. Ne'er shall Fontano see the light again !
He lives, but sees not !—Yes !— The deed is done.
Would it were undone !—Miserable man !
Why ?—why, assist in such a barbarous deed ?

CLAU. Would it were undone ?—Nay, my good Cavallo,

Would that it could be executed twice !
But what said he ?—How bore he all the pain ?
Did he not weep ?—Or bore he all in silence ?

CAV. As to Fontano's miserable cell,
Silent, and anxious of the deed, we mov'd,
Manfredi whispered me to move with care ;
Lest, in our haste, we wak'd him from his rest.
For, though in chains, Manfredi fear'd his arm.

CLAU. The senseless coward !—But did Fontano shew
No signs of misery.—Heav'd he not a sigh ?
Said he no word ?—Did he not curse me ?—Speak !—

CAV. He wore an air of manly melancholy !
We found him sitting at his prison window,
Watching the clouds, that roll'd in volumes round
The giant summit of Vesuvius !
The moon, at intervals, illumin'd his face ;
No passion seem'd to move him :—All was calm,
E'en as the scene, on which his eyes were fixt !
He heard us not :—But, ever and anon,
Drew deep ton'd murmurs from a trembling lyre.—

CLAU. Oh ! what a tale is this !—A poet's tale !
Worthy the pen of Tasso !—Well ! what more ?

CAV. Sometimes he seem'd, as wandering wild in
thought ;

For, now and then, the sounds were wild and sad ;—
Now he would chaunt the Virgin's evening hymn ;
At which I trembled, and Manfredi too !

CLAU. Trembled ?—The bigots !—But proceed,—
proceed.

CAV. Seeing him thus absorb'd, Manfredi rush'd,
As if he were awaken'd from a trance ;—
And as Fontano, for the last, last time,
Fix'd one sad look upon the scene, which rais'd
His thoughts to heaven, full in his visual orbs

Scattered the drug, that robb'd his eyes of light !
Oh ! righteous heaven ! I do repent me now
Of all I saw !—that, seeing, I forbore
To strike the hand that did it.—Gracious heaven !

CLAU. —Repent thee ?—Nay, Cavallo, why repent ?
Thou canst not doubt, but I'll reward thee well !

CAV. Not all the wealth, Italian monarchs boast ;
Nor all the gems, that Indian quarries yield,
E'er can reward me.—Oh ! that I had died
E'er, in an hour accursed, I gave consent,
Thus, thus, to barter all my hopes of heaven !
What, though I were beset with ills around,
Steep'd in the gulph of every deep distress,
And my lov'd infants famishing with want—

CLAU. They'll want no longer !—

CAV. Yes !—a father's fame !
Oh !—better had they pined, from day to day,
Till death had lull'd them to a happier fate ;
Than that their father should allay their wants
In banquets, purchased at a rate so dear !

CLAU. Cavallo !—why—I took thee for a MAN !
Nature had stamp'd a goodly image on thee ;
Therefore, I say, I took thee for a MAN !
This weak, this idle, sense of moral wrong
Writes driveller on thy forehead !—But proceed—

CAV. —'Tis done !—alas !—the coward act is done !
Manfredi did it !—Having so perform'd,
Unpitying,—unrelenting,—and unmoved,
He led him to yon precipices ; where,
Watching the bubbles of a spring, he saw,

Eating wild berries for a feast, a Boy,
Who smil'd with rapture at the sight of money.

CLAU. And what ensued?

CAV. Manfredi gave a ducat;
And whisper'd in the famish'd urchin's ear,
That if he wished for fifty ducats more,
He'd lead the miserable, sightless man,
Up to the margin of a precipice,
And leave him there, to wander as he would!

CLAU. 'Twas well concluded!—And ye left him
there?

CAV. Yes! there we left him.—Thus I quit my tale.
Would I could lose all memory of it too!

CLAU. Hence—hence!—thou hero of the ready tear;
Hence, to Manfredi!—Send Manfredi hither.—

(*Aside.*) I fain would thank him for Fontano's ruin;

[*Exit Cavallo.*

Oh!—it is balsam to my soul! indeed!— [Exit.]

SCENE II.

*An olive grove.—A ruinous edifice on one side; a bridge
over a stream on the other.*

Enter MANFREDI.

'Tis here—at evening—Angelina walks,
To meditate on absent friends.—I'll make her mine!
Fool—that I was—to trust so young a boy,
To lead her father to a precipice!—
Fool!—fool!—unworthy of a high estate!
The boy, as every idiot might foresee,
Pitied the wretch, because the wretch was blind

And leads him on, as I am taught to fear,
By secret paths to Venice. There he hopes
To meet his daughter.—Little does he think—
Ah!—little dreams he, that the friend, he chose,
To guide his daughter to the court of Venice,
Bribed high by me, convey'd the treasure here.
Oh! sightless idiot!—Hope deludes thy fancy!
Meet thee at Venice?—Hail thy hopes at Venice?
Yes!—yes!—she'll meet thee, miserable father,
Meet thee, and stun thee, with her sighs and tears,
Ruin'd and dishonor'd.—She appears!
List—list—she comes!—Her steps resound with music!
[Retires.

Enter ANGELINA, attended by AGNES.

ANGELI. Ah!—with what pensive pleasure does the
mind

Dwell on those moments of delighted youth;
When, led by Angelo, through vallies deep,
We've culled sweet violets from soft beds of moss,
Or snatch'd wild roses from a wilderness
Of thorns and briery brakes:—enchanting time!

AGNES. Signora!—Bless me!—she is so melancholy,
that she will not speak to me.—Poor heart!—she is
not proud—she is only sad!—

(Manfredi comes a little forward, and conceals himself behind one of the trees, not far distant from Angelina.)

ANGELI. Sometimes we've wandered on the rocky
shore,

To hear the murmur of each curling wave :
Sometimes the colours of departing day
Have charm'd our footsteps up the mountain side.
Till in the east, in silent state, the moon
Ting'd every cloud with most bewitching hue ;
And o'er the shadowy scene such glory cast,
That Nature paus'd, and gazed, with silent rapture,
On this her fair creation.

MANF. (*aside.*) How each word
Sinks to the deep recesses of my soul !

ANGELI. But why recal those happy moments
now ?—

AGNES. Why do you then ?—present sorrows,
Signora, are always enough for the time.

ANGELI. Ah, my good Agnes, what thou say'st is
true.

Oh ! my dear father !—How my sinking heart
Bleeds for thy sorrows !—Lead me to thy chamber :
My eyes feel heavy ; and my life a burthen.

AGNES. Come then, good Signora ;—come with me.
I've made a bed for you, as soft as rose-leaves.—Sing-
ing, sleeping, and dreaming, Signora, are the best pas-
simes of a body's life.

ANGELI. Yes !—when we sing
With a pleas'd heart, and sleep with soundest sleep,
And dream of those we love.—Oh ! why didst
wake me,
So early in the morning ?—

AGNES. What did you dream about, then, good
Signora ?—Not about Signor Manfredi ?—No !—no !
—It was not about Signor Manfredi !—

MANF. (*aside.*) Thou haggard serpent!—Yes!—
Thy withered bones
Shall ache with torture all thy life to come.

ANGELI. Methought, last night, I saw my father's
arms
Stretched out to save me.—'Twas an airy dream!—
Ah Heaven!—I thank thee, that he knows not yet,
What woes I've suffered; and what anguish now
Wrings his poor daughter's bosom with despair.

AGNES. Oh!—do not weep, Signora,—do not weep.
Alas!—alas!—she does not hear me.—Poor lady
—I pity her from my heart.—Oh!—good heaven—the
Signor!—

(MANFREDI comes forward.)

ANGELI. Signor Manfredi!—Then I'm lost indeed!

MANF. (*Points to Agnes to go off.*) (*Exit AGNES.*)
Not lost, fair ingrate!—But why drown'd in tears?
Is this my only recompence?—Oh!—Why
Those looks so haughty?—Did I love thee less,
Ill should I brook such dignified returns.

ANGELI. 'Tis well such conduct meets with such re-
ward!

Did'st thou not steal me from the friends, I loved?
And at a time, too, when my father,—ruined—
Needed the solace of his daughter most?
Was that a moment to distress me more?
Oh!—yes—a time, most meet for such design!

MANF. Fair Angelina!—some officious friend
Has, with successful malice, wrong'd thine ear.
I call the sainted spirits to be witness—

ANGE. Away!—away!—No more!—Wert thou to call
E'en Heaven itself, it would avail thee nought.

MANF. By Heaven thou wrong'st me.—No, my Angelina,

I lov'd thy father, though he lov'd not me.

I lov'd his virtues;—I admired his zeal:

And, if I cou'd have imitated any,

His was the model, I'd have copied from.

ANGELI. Has Heaven no judgments for hypocrisy?

MANF. Ah! how thy words do sully thy sweet lips!

Nay!—Angelina, do—I charge,—dismiss

Doubts of my sacred honour, which ne'er yet,

E'en by the venom of a slanderer's tongue,

Has once been breath'd on.—

ANGELI. I'm the slanderer then!

MANF. Come my sweet maid.—

ANGELI. Oh! miracle of meanness—

What?—would'st thou stoop to take a wife so cold,

So loathing, and so hating?—Who, from youth,

Has pledged her faith to one, the proudest boast

Of all the maids of Italy.—His name

I will not, need not, breathe —

MANF. Insulting maid!

This—this is past endurance.—

ANGELI. Who as much,

In all the true nobility of heart,

As in his form and manners, does surpass

Thee;—as, in turn, thyself eclipses all,

The poets dream of, when they paint a monster.

MANF. Why all this anger?—Fair, deluded maid!

Why all this anger? 'twill avail thee nought—

ANGELI. Signor Manfredi!—rather would I die

Ten thousand deaths, than listen to thy prayers.

Angelo!—earliest idol of my heart!

MANF. Angelo?—Yes!—This goodly Angelo
Now pays dear penance for his treachery.

And can this youth be Angelina's idol?

Theme of her boast, and monarch of her heart?

Oh! he would stain it, lady; he would stain it—

ANGELI. Thy tongue speaks slander, thou unworthy
man!

He is all honour; full of noblest thoughts.—

E'en now he animates my glowing breast.

With all his virtues; and inspires my heart

With hatred for thy crimes.—Could Angelo—

MANF. Not Angelo, nor Heaven itself, can now
Secure thee from my arms.—

ANGELI. Oh!—Heaven.—To thee
I call for my revenge!—This friendly dagger—

(Takes a dagger from her bosom and prepares to strike, when MANFREDI seizes her arm, and snatches it away.)

MANF. Is weak and powerless in a woman's hand!
There—get thee hence—thou enemy to love—

(Throws it away.)

Fair Angelina—

ANGELI. Vilest wretch!—Away.

Enter ANGELO.

ANGELI. This way the noise was.—Yes:—The fiend
is here!

Turn, son of hell; thy hated visage turn.

[MANFREDI turns, draws, and rushes upon ANGELO. After fighting some time, he retreats upon the bridge, and falls into the stream, that flows beneath.]

ANG. There, worthless miscreant, buffet with the stream;
 And let thy Fortune save thee, if she will.
[Flies to ANGELINA, who has fainted.]
 Fair Angelina!—'Tis thy love that calls.
 Thy father lives—he journeys on to Venice.
 Look up, my angel;—yes—thy father lives—
 Indeed he lives!—Propertio's gone to Naples,
 To save the remnants of his shattered fortune.

[Takes her in his arms.]

(Cries of Manfredi heard, as he floats down the stream.)

A WOODMAN passes hastily over the stage.

WOOD. Bear up, Signor.—I'll bring you to shore,
 whoever you are. *(without.)* Take hold of this bough,
 Signor.—Holloa—holloa!—

ANG. The woodman saves him!—See—he drags
 him to the shore!

Look up, my fair:—'tis ruin here to stay.
 Just Heaven, how cold!—Alas!—she dies—she dies!
[Carries her into the forest.]

SCENE III.

A distant View of the City of NAPLES.

Enter FONTANO and SCIPIO among Precipices.

SCI. Follow my steps, Signor; and we shall soon
 come to a safer road than this. Oh! 'twas a cruel
 deed, to rob you of your sight, and then to leave you
 among these dreadful precipices.

FON. Cruel beyond the cruelty of men.

Where art thou, Scipio?—Let me hold thine hand!

I fear to step;—these rocks are wild and steep;

There—lead thee on:—to thee and heaven I trust!

SCI. And heaven shall fail you, Signor, sooner than I will.

FON. Heaven proves its mercy by its gift of thee!

Alfonso!—Oh Alfonso!—To be duped

By the low craft of Claudia!—'Tis too much!

Oh!—how man's intellect does crouch before

The bought endearments of an artful woman!

SCI. Whither shall I lead you, Signor?

FON. Lead me to Venice, boy,

Lead me safe thither; and my gratitude

Shall pay thee well, for thy good conduct towards me.

SCI. Venice?—Venice, I suppose, is a long way off, Signor, is it not?—But we shall one day reach it, nevertheless, I hope. This ducat, which the savage Signor gave me, will take us several leagues. When we have spent it, Signor, have I your leave to exercise my profession?

FON. (*smiling.*) Profession?

And what is that, my noble minded boy?

SCI. Why, Signor, you must know, the Virgin and my mother taught me the art of an improv—prov—provi—

FON. Improvisatore?

SCI. Ah!—that is the word, Signor!—So, if I see a rich cavalier, riding on the road, this is the way, I shall begin, perhaps:

Stop, Signor, stop; and, if you can,
 Relieve this poor, ill-fated, man :
 For he was once devoutly kind,
 Though now he's indigent and blind.
 The road is rough;—the way is long;
 The arm of malice, wild and strong :
 Then stop, good Signor, stop, I pray;
 Let fall a ducat in our way;
 And heaven, no doubt, will bless your hopes to-day.

FON. Oh! richest mirror of a noble heart!
 What splendid court contains a soul like thine?

SCI. Come, Signor, don't be afraid;—this is the way:

These rocks so high,—these paths so rough—
 Are desert, waste, and wild enough,

To strike our hearts with dread:

But, let me, Signor, move before:

There—take this hand;—and grieve no more:

For heaven, from this day forth, will pour

Rich blessings on thine head.

FON. To grant me thee, my Scipio, was indeed
 To grant a treasure, that I ne'er could hope,
 In this most weary pilgrimage!—Proceed,
 If heaven has but preserved my child, I yet
 May taste of happiness!—'Tis now sev'n days,
 Since she and Paulo took the road to Venice.

SCI. Then let us take the road to Venice, too,
 Signor. If a lady can travel to Venice in seven days,
 surely you and I can go thither in ten. Come, Signor,
 who is afraid?

FON. Paulo's a man—I would have had a better;
 But that the time prevented.—Heaven preserve her!

SCI. Come, Signor, come along : the road is better now.

FON. Well, my dear boy.—But we must now be cautious.

Albanio's camp, if I mistake not, lies
Full towards the west :—so lead me northward, boy.

SCI. Albanio ? Who is Albanio, Signor ? I have heard a great deal of talk about this Signor Albanio ; but cannot make out, who he is.

FON. Oh ! He is worse, than language e'er can paint !

He slew his wife, at midnight ; fled the land,
Which gave him birth ; and wars on all its sons !—

SCIP. Oh ! ! What a monster !

(A hunting horn heard at a distance.)

Merciful Virgin !—There are three or four men, flying from rock to rock, yonder, as if they were frantic. For heaven's sake, Signor, let us get out of their way, as fast as we can.

(Horn louder.)

Oh !—it is a chamois hunt.—Ah ! now they have killed the poor chamois !—Here they come, Signor ; we had better retire : for they may hunt us now, as far as we know.—Come, Signor ; we have not a single moment to lose.

[Exeunt.]

Enter ALBANIO, SPALATRO, CARLO, MARCO, &c.
ALBANIO comes forward, and leans, for a few moments, in a melancholy attitude against one of the rocks.

ALB. It shames my nature, thus to waste the time
In the pursuit of animals, while men

Are hunting me.—I stand ashamed!—The world—
'Twill laugh to hear it. *(relapses into thought.)*

————— If I draw my sword
Thus, and then thus;—then this way, and then that;
What city's walls shall I have outlin'd?—Speak!

SPA. What city's outlines?—Why—the walls of
Naples.

ALB. Ah! thou art right!—And hadst thou said
the walls

Of Babylon, or Nineveh, thou hadst
Said rightly too. For e'er the gilded moon
Shall wane into a melancholy crescent,
Naples shall be a Nineveh!

SPA. A Nineveh?

ALB. Yes,—a Nineveh, and a Babylon!
One stone shall not repose upon another!
The future traveller shall search for her,
And dust alone shall recompense his search!
And we've been hunting here, like boys and clowns,
Because a chamois cross'd us on our way!
I stand ashamed at such a folly.—Marco,
Unbend thy bow;—and thou—and thou—and thou.

[They unbend their bows.]

This bow shall such a folly see again,
When children pick it up;—and not before.

[Breaking the bow.]

'Tis thus—and more than thus—Spalatro?—here!
Hast ever heard?—But stay—the sun is up,
And this no time for secrets.—Now—be honest—
I sometimes fear my faculties do wander!—
That is, Spalatro, now and then:—not now:—

But when I brood too deeply o'er my sorrows.
Hast thou remark'd it?—Come, be honest—speak—
Speak like a man, that venerates another,
Loving the truth.

SPA. I ne'er observ'd it, Signor.

ALB. Nay now—thy looks speak truer, than thy words.

But I forgive thee.—Truth's an honest fool,
That few men love to deal with.

(*With some hesitation.*) Hast thou heard?—
Hast ever heard, that I was married?

SPA. Yes.

ALB. Thou hast?

SPA. I've heard it whisper'd, Signor—

ALB. Whisper'd?—

Right noble men speak out; they never whisper!
Why should men whisper, when they speak the truth?
Manfredi is the villain!—Was it he—
Was it not he, that stabb'd my innocent wife?

SPA. (*In a very indistinct manner.*) Oh! horrible!

ALB. What?—think'st thou, then, 'twas I?
If thou think that—

SPA. Most noble Signor, thou mistak'st my meaning.

ALB. (*His passion subsiding in an instant.*) Thine
hand!—I'm hasty—but I'm innocent.

Oh, if thou knew mine agony of soul!—

SPA. I could not love thee more!

ALL. Nor we.

Nor we.

Nor we either, Signor.

ALB. Bear with my humour!—Friends, I thank
ye all.

I've sworn eternal hatred to Manfredi!

I've sworn eternal hatred unto Naples!

And war,—eternal war—'gainst all her perjurd sons!

And, if ye wish to know the hated cause,

Follow my steps, and I will tell it ye.

But, ere ye hear my agonizing tale,

Swear, by this sword, ye will revenge my cause—

SPA. We swear!—

ALL. We swear!

SPA. And may perdition hurl
Her deadliest tortures, if we e'er prove false!

ALB. Then I am trebly arm'd!—Spalatro, come;

Come, my bold comrades;—let us to our rocks,

And meditate the ruin.—Naples—see—

Yon distant towers are those of Naples!—we—

We'll pulverize each palace into dust,

————— So small, —————

That e'en a summer's breeze may waft it to the skies!

[*Excunt.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*ALFONSO's Tent.**Enter CLAUDIA, musing.*

CLAU. THIS does perplex me more,
Than all my other causes of complaint !
Manfredi missing?—'Tis a mystery
I have no power to solve.—The king ?—he comes,
When I'm but ill prepared to meet him.—List !—

*Enter ALFONSO, SCIOLTO, and several Officers.**Officers retire to the back part of the stage.**[Claudia retiring.]*

ALF. Whither, my gentle Claudia, art thou going ?
I would exchange some words of import with thee.

CLAU. Ever obedient to thy sacred will !
What wouldst thou urge, my lord ?

ALF. I fear me much,
Signor Manfredi has dishonoured us.—

CLAU. In what ?—dishonoured thee ?—Impossible !

ALF. He came not, at our bidding, to the council ;
Which I've thought prudent, therefore, to delay.
And rumour says, he's no where to be found.
This looks suspicious.—Whither is he gone ?

CLAU. It is a question, I'd give worlds to solve !

ALF. Ha !—wouldst thou ?

CLAU. Yes !—assuredly I would !—

ALF. I know not why thou should'st :—Fontano's
fate

Call'd from thine eye-lid not one pitying tear.—
I see no urgent reason, therefore, why
Manfredi's should distress thee.—He's a villain.

CLAU. A villain ?—What ?—Thy faithful friend,
Manfredi ?

ALF. There's one, who gives us reason to suspect,
This “ *faithful friend*,” Manfredi, is a villain !

CLAU. I much do question it —

ALF. Indeed ?—Indeed ?

CLAU. Beware, my liege, the monarch's bitterest
foe,

Suspicion !—'Tis an enemy, that sits—

Oh ! how ungracefully—on a manly brow.

Dismiss it, Sire, I charge thee.—Tis a fiend !

We ought not to give credit to vile tales,

Against an absent man.

[*Exit haughtily.*]

ALF. 'Tis nobly said !

Oh !—had I listened to that bosom truth,

Ere I had given such credit to Manfredi !

Hither,—Sciolto !—To the neighbouring rocks

Thou shalt attend us.—There Fontano trave

Led by a guide.—We must propose some plan,

As thither we are journeying, to establish,
Whether or no Cavallo's tale be true.

Prepare my Claudia for the march —
e must attend us —Haste :—away

Scio. But if

The stern Albanio should surprize us there?

Ere morrow's night, he meditates, they say,

Naples to lay in ruins !—Mid yon rocks

He sits, when military caution grants,

And loads the air, with many a bitter curse,

Against the sons of Naples.

ALF. Yes ;—'tis true.

But I'm a foe to fear.—He 'll dearly pay

For bearing arms against his native city.

Let us away :—I will not sleep, till I

Have proved the worth, or falsehood, of Fontano.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Scene changes, and discovers ALBANIO, with SPALATRO, CARLO, and a select number of his troop, reclining among scattered rocks, in one of the recesses of a vast pile of mountains, capt with snow. A Cave at the farther end of the stage, almost entirely screened by overhanging herbage.

ALB. My tale is short.—Ye all have heard the chance,

That placed Alfonso on the throne of Naples!

TROOP. We have, we have.

SPA. And suffered from it too.

ALB. He was elected by the people's voice,
To stem the torrent of the lawless power
Of factious nobles.—He deserved the honour!

SPA. 'Tis nobly said, since he is now thy foe.

ALB. To drown all cause of future jealousies,
The king, to win my interest in the state,
Gave me consent to marry with his niece;
Whom I, in studious secresy, had loved,
From the first dawn of youthful manhood.—Oh!
How my nerves thrill!—The vile Manfredi, too,
Long had the captivating maiden loved!
This hated monster, stung with jealous rage,
The very midnight of our wedding day,
Silently stealing, from th' adjoining closet,
(Where, by the treachery of my groom, he lay),
And, as in nature's best repose we slept,
Murdered my wife!—

SPA. Oh, monster!—monster!—

TROOP. Horrible!—

ALB. O'ercome with terror, in the dread confusion,
The assassin fiend escaped my angry arm;
And to the astonished world proclaim'd aloud,
I did the deed in jealousy of him.

SPA. Execrable villain!—

CAR. Vile, detested fiend!

ALB. All Naples rose, in tumults, in the morn.
From house to house the monstrous rumour ran;
That I—that I—that I had stabb'd my wife!
My friends forsook me:—every lisping babe
Was taught to curse me:—e'en Fontano, too,
Believed the tale, and showered invectives on me.

The people, from all quarters of the city,
Like hungry hornets driven from their nests,
Throng'd round my house, demanding my arrest!

SPA. And did the miscreants seize upon thee,
Signor?

ALB. Seize on me?—Aye!—and to the prison gates
They dragg'd me—hissing all the odious way.
Oh, what a time was that!—The city shouted,
Calling me tiger, monster, and hyena,
And dogs were taught to snarl at vile Albanio's name

SPA. Did they not try thee, noble Signor?

ALB. Yes!
Oh, yes—they tried!—But justice fled the city.
Manfredi pensioned witnesses against me!
They swore!—Naples believed!—Albanio was
undone!—

To lose my wife—fame—fortune—in an hour!
Too much it was for human strength!—I'm told—
And I believe the tale—"my mind is ruined!"

[Tears starting into his eyes.]

SPA. Oh no, Signor, that's only a fancy of your's.

CAR. Oh, aye, that's all a fancy of your's, noble
Signor.

ALB. Would I could think so.—Yes, my mind is
ruined!

SPA. Come, noble Signor, do not brood over your
injuries now. Tell us the sequel of your history.

ALB. Amid these mountains once a hermit lived.
His food were berries, and his drink the dews,
Distilling from the leaves of olives.—He—

But stay—my mind is sailing in the air!—
 'Twas not a hermit's history, I was telling :—
 Where left I off?—He pensioned witnesses, I say :
 Naples believed, convicted, and condemned me !
 Oh, cruel, senseless, idiots !—In the town
 One only man was found with heart to pity ;—
 That man my gaoler !—He believed my tale,
 Applied the balm of comfort to my breast,
 Opened wide his gates, and bade me to be free.
 I fled—and here, amid these mountains wild,
 A refuge found.—This, comrades, is my tale!
 For this I have vow'd vengeance to Manfredi ;
 And, for believing his enormous tale,
 Have I vow'd hate against the sons of Naples !

SPA. And we'll assist thee, in thy just revenge !

TROOP. (*tumultuously.*) All !—all !—all !

ALB. Then ere the setting of to-morrow's sun,
 Naples, the credulous, insidious Naples,
 Prostrate shall lie !—Amid its ruins, weeping,
 The snow-hair'd sire shall recognize his son,
 Amongst the heap of dying and the dead ;
 The wife her husband ; while her little babe
 Shall pinch her bleeding breast, in vain, for food !

SPA. Then come, my comrades, echo every note,
 That forms the chorus of our evening song.

ALB. First to the banquet !—Let us form the hymn
 O'er golden goblets. Enter to the feast.
 Come, my brave brothers, to this coral cave ;
 Screen'd from the sight by many a shady bough.
 Full many a fathom is it deep.—'Tis here

We hold our banquet.—Enter to the feast ;—
And drink due honour to the safe arrival
Of those brave troops, who'll join us on the morrow.
[*Exeunt into the cave.*]

Enter FONTANO and SCIPIO.

SCI. Take care, Signor ; mind how you walk ;
these great stones, and pieces of rock, are enough to
throw both of us down.—Oh !—I begin to be almost
tired.

FON. Let us sit down then, Scipio.—I would not
tire thee, for the world. Let us sit down, I say.

SCI. So we will, Signor.—Here,—here—is a clean,
mossy place, fit for a lady to sit down upon.

[*They sit down.*]

FON. Art thou hungry or thirsty, Scipio ?—

SCI. N—o ; are you thirsty, Signor ?

FON. Yes, my little friend, I am thirsty.

SCI. So am I, Signor ; very thirsty indeed !

FON. I thought thou saidst, thou wert not, Scipio ?

SCI. Why, I did not mean to confess, that I was
thirsty, unless you were so too, Signor ; because, if
we are ever so thirsty, there is nothing for us to
drink.

FON. Thou art the best of all possible comforters,
Scipio.—But let us search about ; perhaps we may
find a spring, some where bubbling from these mossy
rocks.

SCI. So we will, Signor.—It is not impossible.—

Among the woods, along the ground
Among the rocks we'll look around.

FON. Thou dear little improvisatore !

SCI. Perhaps from some lone rock there wells

A bubbling spring ;—perhaps there dwells

Some little nymph of Scipio's age,

Who guards the fount, from robber's rage.

Ah !—If I find one, as I go,—

I'll kiss the little maiden so !

And while she cries—" No—no—no—no ;"—

I'll bid her love poor Scipio !

What a vast number of birds, Signor, there seem to be in this solitude.—I wonder, they should choose to live, where there is not a single soul to listen to their music.—Did you not say, Signor ; that the bird, we heard just now, was a nightingale ?

FON. Yes ; 'twas a nightingale !—sure notes so wild,

So tender, and so rich, were never heard

In Persia, or in Araby.

SCI.

List !—list !—

[*Nightingale sings.*]

There, there, she flies to yon tall sycamore.

FON. Hark !—Hark !—She breathes her solemn strain again !

SCI. Oh !—how she jugs !—

FON. A pause more sweet, than that,

Ne'er lulled the night to ravishment !—Again ?

SCI. Oh !—there she flies !—Why she flies as fast, Signor, as if she thought, we came to rob her of her brains.—Fairies, they say, Signor, live upon the brains of nightingales.

FON. Do they so, my little bird of paradise ?—

SCI. Yes !—Signor.—And not only on the brains of nightingales, but on the purple leaves of violets.—Oh !—It must be excellent food !

Violet leaves and nightingales' brains
Are food for gentle fairy ;
When she whispers amorous strains,
To slumbering maids of the dairy.

FON. Thou art so cheerful and engaging, boy,
That nightingales will cover thee with leaves ;
And flowers spring up, in myriads, o'er thy grave,
To tell each stranger, as he passes by,
That Nature's happiest work lies buried there.

SCI. Oh !—that were charming, if it e'er prove true.

Violet leaves and nightingales' brains
Are food, &c. &c.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter ANGELO and ANGELINA, at the farther end of the stage.

ANGELI. Ah ! dearest Angelo, to thee I owe,
More than a life of endless power could pay.
How shall I thank thee ? How reward thy love ?

ANG. With thy sweet self !

ANGELI. An indigent reward !

ANG. Richer, by far, than monarchs can bestow.

ANGELI. But ah !—my father !—whither strays my father ?

Oh !—never, never, shall I see him more !

This way, thou saidst, he travelled ;—but I see
No traces of his wandering !—Oh ! that I could !

When first thou sav'd'st me from Manfredi's arms,
 I gavè myself to happiness : ah ! then
 I little thought, how rude the storm had visited
 My father's sacred head. Oh ! dearest love—
 Oh ! think, how hard to be deprived of sight,
 And wandering all alone. —————

ANG. Hush, my sweet maid, and let me lead thee to
 The sheltering arch of these impending piles ;
 While I, amid the mazes of the rocks,
 Seek for a cave to screen thee from the winds.

————— Here sit thee down ;
 Till I have found, amid these desert wilds,
 A cave, to shelter thy sweet innocence.

(Searches about.)

ANGELI. How does the music of thy voice compose
 Each misery to silence ! Art thou gone ?
 How shall I cheat the anxious time away,
 Till thy belov'd return ? Oh that I could,
 Like Orpheus, fam'd of old, with vocal lyre,
 Charm these rude rocks away !—Angelo ! *(Calls.)*

[Her voice reverberates among the mountains.]
 How the rocks echo !—Angelo !—Angelo !—

[Echoes.]

Stay—I will follow thee ; we'll search together. *[Exit.]*

Enter SCIPIO cautiously.

What sounds are these, I wonder ?—These rocks do
 nothing but echo !—and that, too, with such music,
 as I never heard before. Why—I do not see any one !
 Signor Fontano told me, that echo never speaks, but
 when some one has spoken to her. But I do not be-

lieve, any one spoke to her now ; so, I suppose, she has learnt to talk to herself. (*Looks about.*)

Here ?—No—I do not see any one here.—I will return to the Signor again ! Ah !—now—I would give half this ducat, if I could but discover a fountain : I am so thirsty, I know not what I shall do !

FON. (*without.*) Scipio !—Scipio !—where art thou, Scipio ?

SCI. Ha—ha ! —There is the Signor, I declare. Stop, Signor, I am coming. Come along, Signor ! The way is even there : come along : a little more to the right, Signor. [*Enter FONTANO.*] Why, I declare, Signor, you walk very well without a guide !

FON. Thou art an excellent companion, for a melancholy spirit, Scipio.

SCI. But the echo, Signor !—Did you ever hear any thing, so beautiful in all your life ?—Now,—if I might—I would sing you a canzonet, Signor, that you would, perhaps, have no objection to hear again.—That is, when you are melancholy.

FON. Can'st thou ?—Then sing it me, I pray thee.

SCI. You must not laugh, Signor.—Don't look at me, Signor.

FON. Alas !—my boy, I ne'er shall see again !

SCI. Oh ! I beg your pardon, Signor.—I had really quite forgot, that you were blind !—I am a thoughtless little fellow, Signor, without wit ; and, I am sorry to say, without money.—But I mean no harm, Signor ; and so I'll sing you a stanza :—and if you do not like it, I'll never sing you another :—so you will only lose three minutes of time.

FON. Thou mak'st me smile, in spite of all my sorrows !

ECHO—CANZONET.

I.

SCI. From the grot, where Echo lies,
At dawn of day, fond Zephyr flies ;
And, gliding on the rays of morning,
With many a dye the clouds adorning ;
Now he soars, and now he falls ;
Now on gentle ECHO calls ;
While, from her green recess, the Nymph replies
In wildest melodies.

[Echoes.]

SCI. There, Signor,—is not that very pretty ?

FON. Beautiful, my little nightingale ; and beautifully sung.

SCI. Nay—Signor,—I did not ask for that.—But there's only one stanza, Signor ;—shall I sing you the other ?—

FON. Ah!—my sweet linnet, twenty if you will.

SCI. There is but one more, Signor ;—but that, I think, is the best.—Now then !—I'm almost ashamed, too !—

II.

Every glen, and mountain round,
Repeats the wild, mysterious, sound ;
And all the scene, both far and near,
Delighted lends a listening ear ;
Till, lost in eddying circles wide,
From hill to hill, from side to side,
Her hovering voice, in sweet progression dies,
In gentlest extasies.

[Echoes.]

SCI. There, Signor.—Never ask me to sing again.
—But what is this?—I surely hear a sound—

FON. List! list!—Lead forward :—Danger travels
near.—

[*Exeunt.*

*Re-enter ANGELO and ANGELINA, at the farther end
of the stage.*

ANG. These rocks seem vocal; yet no human form
Appears to animate their solitude.

ANGELI.

A voice

We surely heard; and then its echo.

ANG.

Yes!—

Yet here no trace of wandering man is found!—

(*Sees the cave.*)—A cave!—

Made to our hopes, and suited to our fortune!

Its entrance form'd of coral!—like those caves,

Form'd in the niches of a stormy coast,

For nymphs, who, warbling wild seductive notes,

Lull the enchanted mariner to sleep.

ANGELI. Oh! do not enter :—It perchance contains
Adders, or serpents, wolves, or famish'd eagles.—

ANG. Fair Angelina, can thy bosom know
Such groundless fears as these?—Ah!—Tell me
whence—

ANGELI. Nay—do not chide me, Angelo :—yet if
Fate and misfortune have decreed it so,

Chide as thou wilt, but do not venture there.

Nay—I entreat thee :—On my knees I beg :

Oh! If thou love me, grant this one request!—

ANG. My Angelina !—Cease these terrors wild.
Hemm'd, as we are, on every side, we turn—

ANGEL. Ah !—but, my Angelo, it looks so wild ;—
If there thou go, some hidden power within
Will tear thee from me :—If thou enter there,
I ne'er shall see thy form, belov'd, again.

ANG. See !—Yonder cloud portends a coming storm.
These rocks afford no shelter ;—not a hut
Adorns these sterile solitudes with smoke,
Curling in peaceful volumes.—Sit thee there.

ANGELI. My dearest Angelo—

ANG.—The storm begins
In yonder valley :—See !—The lunar bow

[*A lunar rainbow.*

Stretches from side to side.—Some shelter must be found !

ANGEL. Dost thou persist ?—Then I will enter too.—
Thy fate is mine, whatever it may be.

ANG. No !—I entreat.—Sit there till I return.

[*Angelo is about to enter the cave ;—but returns
hastily.*]

We must away !—destruction lurks within.—

[*Exeunt.*

Enter ALBANIO.

ALB. Their merriment disturbs me ;—and, indulg'd
Too long, will drown, perhaps, their thoughts of ven-
geance.

I'll summon them to rest !—

[*Blows his bugle.—Spalatro and the troop issue
confusedly from the cave.*]

Form into groupes !

[They arrange themselves into detached groupes.

The banquet over, time, with drowsy wand,

Lulls the grey eve, and woos to short repose.

Now let each comrade travel to his bed :—

'These hollow rocks abound in shaggy moss,

Equal to beds of down, for Nature's hardy sons.

[Troops disperse.—Some climb up the rocks, and repose upon their points; others lie down at their feet.

Mine be the station, that commands the bay,

O'erlook'd by huge Vesuvius.—Brother!—Brother!—

[To Spalatro.

Last night I saw strange visions, as I slept.

Francisca beckon'd me !—I heard a voice

Crying out, “ Murder,”—“ Rescue,”—and

“ Revenge ! ”—

And then I saw Manfredi torn by serpents :

And then I thought, they curl'd along the ground,

Until they crept into a yawning cave,

And made its hollow womb resound with hisses.

Nay—do not speak :—We have no prophets now,

To tell the meaning of such horrid dreams.

Marvel—but doubt not.—Polydore !—good night :

Good night, my comrades; sleep ye well till morn.

[The troops murmur affectionate applause, as Albanio retires, accompanied by Spalatro and a part of the band.

A C T IV.

SCENE I.

A wilderness, lying between the camp of ALFONSO and the rocks of ALBANIO. FONTANO and SCIPIO asleep, by the side of a waterfall.

Enter ANGELO and ANGELINA.

ANGELI. OH! what a sad and awful night is this?
There seems no limit to our dangers: list!
List—how soft music swells upon the gale!
Now all is silence.—Hark! It swells again:
Rising and falling with the buoyant wind.

ANG. I've heard it long. Albanio's troop I fear!
We must away; or ruin will o'ertake us!

ANGELI. Whither, oh! whither shall we fly?—
again? *(Sounds approach.)*
Ah!—dearest Angelo—sure heaven deserts us!

ANG. Lean on this arm, thou persecuted maid;
While life remains, no power shall force thee from me.

ANGELI. Let, let us fly. I dare delay no longer.

[Exeunt.]

SCI. (*waking.*) Signor! Signor! I heard music,
Signor. I heard it in my sleep. (*Wakes Fontano.*)

FON. What means all this, my Scipio?

SCI. I am sure, I do not know, Signor: but I will
step out, if you please, and see if I can discover where,
and what it is.

(*After looking about some time, he runs hastily to
Fontano.*)

Oh! Signor! Signor! I see a whole army of soldiers
coming this way.

FON. An army of soldiers, Scipio?

SCI. Yes, Signor, a whole army of soldiers.

(*Music.*)

*Enter ALFONSO, CLAUDIA, SCIOLTO, and an
OFFICER.*

ALF. Remain ye there! At present come no
further.

CLAU. What do we here, my most illustrious Lord?

ALF. Retire thee, Claudia, to yon spreading
olive.

Nay—nay—no questions:—I will soon be with thee.

Follow this Signor: 'tis the hour of danger:

Guard her with hero's care.—Farewell—farewell.

CLAU. (*Aside.*) 'Tis most mysterious!—But my will
obeys. [*Exit with Officer.*]

ALF. This way he travelled; but we meet him not.
(*They search about.*)

SCI. (*After peeping out, in a whisper to Fontano.*)
Here are two rich cavaliers, Signor: let me beg some

money of them ; for our stock is very low, and Venice is a long, long, way off.

(Scipio goes out, and pulls off his hat to Sciolto.)

I'm hungry, thirsty, cold, and poor,
 Obligated to beg from door to door ;
 No cot have I to lay my head,
 Nor mother's care to give me bread.
 Mid hail and rain, in frost and snow,
 The sport of all the winds that blow,
 Forlorn I rove, from day to day,
 Along this rough and rugged way :
 Oh ! Signors, do bestow upon
 Affliction's poor deserted son,
 One little gift to help him on.

SCIOL. Thou art a most eloquent little beggar, whoever thou art, and I am inclined to give thee a ducat for thine eloquence ; but thou must, first of all, tell me, whether thou hast seen a blind gentleman travelling this way ?

SCI. A blind gentleman ? Have you any business with him, Signor ?

SCIOL. What matters it to thee, whether I have business with him or not ?

SCI. Scipio has as much right to ask that question, as you have to ask, whether he has seen a blind gentleman travelling this way ?

ALF. One would think, thou wert born in England, thou free-thinker and free-speaker ! Well, then, we have business with him ;—and there is a ducat for thine information.

SCI. (*refusing the money.*) Is your business with him good or bad, Signor? For I would not tell you, if I thought, you meant him any harm.

ALF. Thou art the noblest beggar, that I ever saw ; and as thou confer'st nobility on thy profession, I will tell thee :—our business is good.

SCI. (*to Sciolto.*) Is that true, Signor?

SCIOL. True as the moon.

SCI. True as the moon!—Ah!—but the moon, they say, wanders about all the year round, and is constant to nothing.

ALF. True, then, as thine own honesty!

SCI. That's sworn like a true and gallant Signor. Now I know, you will not deceive me: but, first of all, tell me his name.

SCIOL. Signor Fontano.

FON. (*coming forward.*) Who seeks Fontano?

ALF. (*to Sciolto.*) This is most fortunate!
What a calm dignity his visage wears!
(*To Fontano.*) And art thou here, thou great and injured man?

This is far better, than my hopes had whisper'd,
E'en to my fancy.

(*To Sciolto.*) Now I'll try him!—Mark!

Claudia and stern Manfredi swear, he's *guilty*.

Cavallo whispers, he is *innocent*. Observe!

If he prove guilty :—why—his treacherous head

Is not a ducat's worth.—(*To Fontano.*)—Most noble Signor!

I pay thee all the homage of a friend.

FON. To whom, oh Signor, am I thus indebted,
For this unsought, unmerited, respect?

ALF. Albanio.

FON. Who?—Albanio?—He who vows
Eternal hatred to his native city?

ALF. The same.

SCIOL. (*to Alfonso.*) He answers, as if innocent.

ALF. That may be artifice.—My noble Signor!
Thine injuries demand revenge!—Revenge!
Give me thy sanction and assistance then:
March with my troops:—thine honourable name
Alone would raise an army in my cause.

FON. Rather than do so, I would lingering die,
Ah!—inch by inch!—Chain'd to a pointed rock,
The hungry vulture, or the famished eagle,
Should tear my entrails.—What?—Eternal shame!
Conspire against my country?

ALF. 'Gainst thy country?
Has not thy country thrown thee from its bosom?

FON. It has, it has!—Yet must I love it still!
My country?—Yes, while one declining stone
Lies tottering on another; while thy fields
Blush with their purple vineyards; and thy rocks
Elevate their spires to heaven: oh, use me—
Use me as thou wilt; cover me with wrongs;
Tear me with taunts;—make me a monument
Of public scorn, and I will love thee still!
And, as I beg from door to door, call down
The choicest gifts of bounteous heaven upon thee!

SCIOL. Has not Manfredi robb'd thine eyes of light?

FON. He has—he has !

ALF. Did not thy sovereign, too,
Consent to that most horrible transaction ?

FON. (*mournfully.*) He did—he did !—

ALF. And wilt thou not revenge ?

SCIOL. And did not Claudia—
Dost thou know ?—Thy daughter—

FON. My daughter ?—What ?—What of my daughter ?—speak—

ALF. And canst thou not have heard it then ?

FON. Oh, speak—
Tell me—oh, quickly tell me—of my daughter !
Speak, gracious Signor—I intreat thee speak !

ALF. (*aside.*) Oh, miracle of honour !—how thy
virtue

Wrings my sad bosom, for my conduct towards thee !

FON. If thou hast mercy, Signor !—

[ALFONSO turns aside to conceal his emotion.]

SCIOL. Miserable man !

Whilst thou wert lingering in thy loathsome cell,
Returning thanks, most grateful thanks, to heaven,
It still had left thee in thy miseries,
One treasure yet, of value more than all,
Dear to thine heart ;—the base, the vile, Manfredi
Devised the means to rob thee of the treasure.

FON. (*kneeling.*) O, thou eternal Father of the
world,
Upon whose mercy I've relied so long ;—
Whose matchless power, the earth, the air, the skies,
The universe demonstrate ; and whose justice,
Though long delay'd, is ne'er delay'd in vain ;

To thee I call for mercy in the present,
And justice in the future !—Thy dread works
I dare not scan ;—thy dispensations
I will not, dare not, question !—Weak and humbled,
Let not my words offend thee !—Oh, my father !—

[Appears lost in silent agony]

SCI. Signor—Signor !—Signor !—

FON.

What wouldst thou, child ?

SCI. Would, that we could lie down among these
rocks, Signor, and close our eyes for ever !—Oh, I
could weep, Signor ; but if I wept, you perhaps
would weep too, and that would break my heart.

[Hides his face in FONTANO's robe.]

FON. My dearest boy, I thank thee for this pity.

ALF. Oh, wretch ! to wound the noble man so
much.

Could I speak comfort in this hour of woe—

FON. I cannot, ought not, to be comforted !
My daughter !—Oh, my child !—Thine injuries
Complete my awful measure of affliction.

Fortune can do no more !—I once had hope--

Now I despair—Heaven seems to have forsaken me !

SCI. *(weeping.)* My mother has often told me,
Signor, that Heaven never entirely forsakes the good.

FON. Oh, my sweet boy !—I pray thee, Signor,
leave me.

Here will I die—I will no longer hope,
Nor struggle with my destiny.

[Sinks down on the edge of a rock.]

ALF. Oh, Signor !—

FON. Leave me, oh leave me ; add not to my griefs,
By bearing witness to my miseries.

ALF. Signor Fontano—I would whisper comfort—

FON. Who speaks of comfort to a man like me ?
Banish'd my country—by my sovereign wrong'd—
Who speaks of comfort ?—Am I not traduced ?—
My house dishonour'd—and my daughter ruin'd ?

ALF. Wilt thou not hear me, Signor ? I am come
To supplicate thy pardon.

FON. (*impatiently.*) I'll not hear !
—And yet, Albanio, I must tell thee, that,
In this thy war against thy native country,
Thou dost offend both God and man !—The power,
That rules the destinies of men and kingdoms,
Visits that crime more heavily than murder.—
Quit, then, thy course of ruin !—I can love
None, who forsake their country ;—and admire
None, who presume her errors to revenge.
No !—when our country loves us not, return
Grief for her hate ; but let no arm be raised,
Against the blind injustice of her will.
Who loves his passions better than his country,
Deserves full measure of his country's hate !

ALF. Heaven !—What a noble patriot have I ruin'd !

SCIOL. Signor Fontano—'tis thy king that speaks.

ALF. I come, Fontano, to entreat thy pardon.
Tell me, thou noble and much injured man,
Canst thou forgive ?

FON. My king ?—It is a dream !
My fancy wanders, and my ears deceive me !

ALF. Oh, no, Fontano—'tis thy sovereign bends.
These tears respect: forgive me, if thou canst!

FON. Thrice honour'd master!—dearly valued
friend!—

I've loved thee ever with an ardent zeal:
I know thy nature:—thou hast been deceived.
Let us, then, lose all memory of the past
From this sweet hour.

ALF. I clasp thee to my heart

FON. But I am guilty of a crime to feel
One ray of joy, while yet my daughter lives,
And does not live for me.

ALF. She does!—She does!—
She lives for thee, and all the world beside;
Fair as the spring, and pure as driven snow.
Rescued, by Angelo, from lawless power
Of unchaste love, among these rocks she strays,
(As penitent Cavallo tells me), led
Led by the hand of Angelo; whom you,
And I, and all th'admiring world, shall love.

FON. Ye gracious powers!—Oh!—this is joy in-
deed!—

Oh!—could I press to this long-aching heart,
My lovely Angelina.

ALF. (*To the Guards*). To the camp
Of stern Albanio, now direct your course.

FON. Oh! seek my daughter!—Should Albanio's
troops

Behold her wandering, all is lost for ever.
Oh!—seek my daughter—spare a father's tears!

ALF. Thy tears are mine!—(*To Guards.*)—And as
ye march along,
Let every eye be watchful. He, who first
Espies the noble wanderers, shall receive
A rich reward from me.

FON. And what is more—
A father's grateful thanks!—Oh! let us fly:
A father's haste would far outstrip the wind!

ALF. Yet ere we go, I would fair Claudia see.
(*To Sciolto.*) She journey'd with us: lead us to the
shade,

Beneath which she reposes. Come, Fontano,
Lean on this arm——

FON. I have a father's fears
Albanio's troops——

ALF. Anticipate no ill.
Heaven bears its character for justice still!

SCI. (*Chagrined at Fontano's taking the arm of Al-
fonso.*)

Nay!—let me lead thee, Signor, pray:—
Each sylph, and sylphid,—fairy,—fay,
Or, by what name soe'er ye call
The nymphs, who guard this waterfall;
Proclaim, that, whether strait or wide
The path meanders,—I'M THY GUIDE!
And, though thy king desires to see;
Thy guide has been, and still must be,
To lead thee, where thou want'st to go,
The wild—but faithful—Scipio.

(*Takes Fontano's hand, and insists upon leading
him.*)

FON. Excellent boy!—The world has not thy peer!

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter MANFREDI (cautiously) from behind.

Curst be the hour, I e'er beheld the sun
And curst the hour, that gave my mother birth!
May the earth open; may the mountains fall;
And crush Fontano, and Albanio, too,
In one deep wreck of ruin.——

What have these eyes beheld? Fontano clasp'd,
Firm in the king's embrace! Curst be the man,
Who saw me floating in my watery bed,
Dragg'd me to shore, and took me to his hut,
Reared on the craggy margin of the torrent.—

Vile, senseless, fool! I hate thee for thy pains.

What shall I do?—And whither shall I fly?

Outcast of nature! Stay—Albanio's camp

Lies at the feet of yon gigantic mountains.

——— The thought is masterly;—

I'll ruin him again! And on his ruin

Exalt myself.

[*Drawing some keys and a dagger from under his robe.*]

These keys—this dagger—oh!

It is a paradise of thought! Disguise

Thy face and figure, too, Manfredi.—Yes! 'tis done.

Some berries, and a bending frame, shall screen

Albanio's enemy. I breathe again!

And dare thee, Fortune, to thy utmost hate. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

ALBANIO, *sitting in a meditative posture. Part of his army lying asleep, in detached groupes, around him. He comes forward and sits upon a jutting crag.*

ALB. Music has lulled these iron hearts to rest !
But mine shall never more be soothed to sleep,
Till yon proud city smokes beneath its ruins.—
Again !—it pleases, though it soothes me not ;—again !

[Music :—soon after interrupted by vivid flashes of lightning :—Music continues till the lightning is followed by a violent thunder storm.]

The angry storm subsides at last !—
Full many a year, upon this rocky coast,
I've watched the warring elements ; while these,
More happy far than me, lie lock'd in sleep ;
But ne'er, till now, have I been greeted with
Such dismal wailings, as these rocks sublime,
This night have echo'd from their secret caves.
Oh ! I could wish to see this piteous world
Crumble to atoms !—And the hideous noise
Of its crude elements would charm my ear,
Like softest music, which, I've oft times heard,
Lulls the sad soul of anguish to repose.—

[Music resumes.]

In what deep silence wave yon clouds of jet.
Mark, how the moon-beams gild their shadowy skirts :
[The dark clouds glide gradually away ; the moon shines brilliantly ; and the whole of Mount Vesuvius is seen towering in the perspective.]

How glorious!—Lo!—Vesuvius appears!—
 Itself a planet.—Towering o'er the vale,
 It gives new grandeur to sublimity.—
 Magnificent!—Oh Nature!—How thy works
 Dissolve my soul in holiest admiration!—

[Loud peals of thunder.]

Roll on, ye heralds of omnipotence;—
 Roll to the utmost limit of the spheres.
 And you, ye lightnings, guide me on my way
 To yon proud towers.—But spare the time-worn walls:
 Rob not my soul of vengeance:—'tis mine own.
 Ah! Can ye sleep my comrades?—Well; sleep on.
 Would I could sleep as well!—The thunder roars
 Harsh music to harsh bosoms; but to me—
 It breathes soft, melancholy, music.—Oh!—
 There was a time—How wild the volumes roll!
 Echoing from one deep valley to another:—
 Now dying in faint murmurs.—Hush'd the scene!
 So dies each tumult of an injured spirit;
 When hope has charm'd each passion into peace.
 —Mine ne'er will rest, till death has closed the scene!

[Relapses into melancholy.]

ANGELO, supporting ANGELINA, appears on
 one of the cliffs above.

ALB. What's this I see, on yonder cliff?—a youth!
 Bearing a fainting woman in his arms.
 Carlo!—Spalatro!—Polydore!—awake!—
 How can ye sleep amid this warring uproar?

[The troops start up, and fly to their arms.]

SPAL. Who's there?—what danger?—

CAR. Signor—didst thou call?—

ALB. See ye not yonder fine-form'd maid, that leans,
Weak and exhausted, on her lover's breast?—

CAR. Good heaven!—why run we not to succour
them?—

[CARLO, and several of the troop, climb to the
spot; and, after some difficulty, succeed in
leading Angelo and Angelina down the preci-
pice.—Angelo comes forward, Angelina cling-
ing to his robe.

ANG. Fortune has cast me in so many dangers,
Most noble chief, that I would well consent,
No more to buffet her tumultuous stream;
Did I not feel, for this affrighted maid,
More pangs, than death has power to bestow.

ALB. (*Aside*)—A noble pair!—and worthy of each
other.

ANG. If thou hast ever felt the bitter pang
Of ill requited service;—ever seen
A faithful friend, that every secret knew,
Which prisoned in thine heart, accused, disgraced,
Cast in a dungeon;—from that dungeon freed,
Only to wander into banishment,
An unknown outcast—

ALB. (*Aside with great emotion.*)

Thou hast touched the chord!—
And yet I fear, that he was born in Naples!

ANG. ——— But ah!—
If love hath ever fired thy manly breast,
And innocence has answered thine entreaty,
With the soft rapture of requiting love;

With heart,—all beating,—thy benignant hand
Will stretch, with pleasure, to assist this Angel.

ALB. Guard them, ye Powers!—My conscience
sinks within me.—

ANG. O'erwhelm'd by fortune,—trembling under
pangs

Of home remembered, friends, and parents too;
Fainting with hunger; sinking with fatigue;
We ask thee nothing, but a little food,
To quell our hunger; and the meanest bed
To rest our weary frames.—Oh!—do not tremble!

Lean on this arm, my Angelina.—Signor!
This maid is fainting with fatigue:—I charge thee,
Shew her thy pity.—

ALB. (*To Angelina.*)—Fairest maid, this youth
Speaks to the heart.—But I forget my oath!
(*To Angelo.*)—As thou dost value life, and what is
more,

This maid's possession,—answer me with truth.
—— Art thou from Naples?—(*A pause.*)

(*Aside.*) I do entreat, that he may answer “No.”
Stay—I'll not ask him:—No!—I will not ask him!
—Thou'rt born in Florence—yes—I know thou
wert!—

I saw thee there some eighteen months ago—

ANG. In Florence?—No!—In Naples I was born.

ALB. Ye powers!—I fear'd as much!—Now for
my oath!

I wish I had not sworn!
—— I wish I had not sworn!—

(*After a pause.*)—Dost know Albanio?

ANG. HE, who on the night
Of sacred marriage, massacred his wife ?
Who fled ?—who wars upon his native city ?
I know his name too well !—

ALB. Ye sons of darkness !—
Heard ye not that ?—He strikes the chord of madness.
No pity now shall lull me into mercy. —
Carlo !—Spalatro !—Bind this youth of Naples ;
Bind him with bonds, and seer his flowing locks—

ANGELI. Oh chief ! I do entreat thee to forbear.
What has he done ?—What uttered to offend ?
What he has said, I pledge a virgin's word,
Is sacred truth.—Outcasts, indeed, we are :
Fall'n from as high estate, as fortune grants
To any lord in Naples.—Tell me, then,
What he has done, that draws this sudden flash
Of wildest anger, from thy threatening eye ?

ALB. Did he not say, that he was born in Naples ?
A state, that I've resolved, on oath, to ruin ;
And every son, that comes within my power !

ANG. Unnatural fiend !—Oh, worse than leopard
born !

ALB. (*to Angelina.*) Did he not say, Albanio fled
his country ?

Murdered his wife ?—He said it—yes, he said it !—
Deny ye that ?—Said he not that ?—

ANG.

Albanio ?

ALB. Yes !—ALBANIO—FUGITIVE and MURDERER !
I AM ALBANIO ; and I love the name ;
Though I abhor the practice of your charge.
Bear, bear him hence, ye pausing idle crew :
Take him and hurl him from yon pointed brow,

That peaked summit, called "Albanio's Rock!"

Hurl him to the dolphins—hurl him—hurl him down

ANGELI. Oh, on my bended knees—

ALB.

Avaunt—avaunt!

No, no!—they neither heard, nor pitied, me!

None, born in Naples, therefore, shall receive

One ray of hope from me.

ANG.

I've heard of tigers,

Lions, and panthers—but I never yet

Read of a monster, who did hate the land,

Which gave him birth, with such a hate as thine!—

ALB. I care not what thou'st read.—Albanio is
Albanio's self:—let that suffice for Naples!

Damn'd and insidious race,—how I abhor ye!

Holding me guilty of a crime, so foul,

As wed a wife, and stab her to the heart,

Deserves that famine, pestilence, and war

Should visit ye for ages.

ANG. (*to Angelina, pointing to heaven.*)

————— Look, upward, angel!

Mid yon bright globes our consolation rests!

ANGELI. They shall not part us!—We will die
together.

ALB. (*impatently.*) Take—take him hence, and
hurl him on the strand;

While hated Naples bleeds at every pore

ANGELI. Oh, do not tear him from these eyes away!

I ne'er can bear so sad a separation.

Take me—take me—but let that youth still live:

I'd bear ten thousand tortures for his sake.

[*As they prepare to lead Angelo off the stage, Angelina endeavours to follow, but is prevented.*]

ANG. (*to troop.*) Away—away!—One last embrace,
my love!—

ALB. Begone!—(*aside.*) Or this rough bosom may
relent.

ANGELI. Oh, let me follow.—Monsters, let me go!—
Look at him—see—ah, how can ye refuse
The grand expression of those speaking eyes?
Oh, good Albanio—I intreat thy mercy;—
Let me but follow, and I'll bless thy name,
E'en in the hour of death!—

[*He turns from her with an air of softened dignity.*]

ANG. Farewell—farewell —

[*They tear him away.*]

ANGELI. Off, off, ye miscreants:—do not hold me
thus!

Angelo—Angelo!—my dearest Angelo!—

[*Faints.*]

ALB. (*to troop.*) Leave me, oh leave me.—Send
Marcella hither.

[*Troops exeunt.*]

[*Albanio brings Angelina to the front of the
stage, and holds her upon his knee. He bends
over her, and becomes softened by her beauty.*]

ALB. How fair, how lovely!—In all nature's works,
A form, more lovely, never met my sight.
She almost tempts me to forego my hate;
But I have sworn, and will not be subdued.—

[*Pauses, and looks at her with emotion,*

Has beauty, then, the power to charm me still?
Fortune!—Thou hast, for many a weary year,
Singled me out to be thine instrument;
On which to play thy melancholy airs;

And used me, as a discord, to complete
 The cruel concord of thy varying notes.
 Tell me, then, jilt, is this sweet, blooming, creature,
 Cast in my way to smooth these rugged brows,
 So wrinkled by my sorrows; and to soothe
 The harsher features of my gloomy soul?
 No—I disdain thy boon!—Francisca lives!—
 Lives in my heart!—her sainted spirit lives
 In regions pure. Who sent her there?—’Twas *I*!—
 Yes—Naples swears it was Albanio sent her;—
 Stabb’d with a poignard!—Oh, revenge, revenge!
 The time is coming;—nay, the time is come.

Enter MARCELLA and CARLO.

Take this fair maid;—and use thy best design,
 To calm the anguish of her wounded breast.—
 Soothe her torn heart—I war not with a woman.

MAR. Come, my sweet innocent, I will not harm
 thee!

CAR. (*in an under tone.*) Poor lady!—E’en this
 savage bosom feels

To witness thy distress. [*Exeunt, bearing Angelina.*]

ALB. Away—away:

Say, Naples, how my vengeance can display
 Proofs of envenomed hate, more full than this?

The youth is noble, and the maid is lovely;
 Both form’d in Nature’s most exalted mood.

The nobler, and more lovely, be the victims;

The better, firmer, ranker, my revenge.

“Revenge is virtue!”—Is it?—No, ye’re false,
 Who cry, “Revenge is virtue!”—But my oath—

My oath doth make me war against my reason.

And yet—(*in a sudden paroxysm.*) Oh, the vile race
of miscreants!—Yes—

Have they not warr'd?—They've warr'd on me for
years.

He says, I've sent my innocent wife to heaven!—

Oh! that the father of yon boundless deep

Would change his figure to a towering cliff,

Round which the waves and winds might tyrannize for
ages.

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A Forest.

CLAUDIA, *reclining under an Olive Tree, attended by several Officers.*

She comes forward, meditating.

CLAU. WHY I was left in this wild forest thus,
I cannot yet divine. Alfonso told me,
He came to watch the motions of Albanio,
Strange mode of watching! Ah! I fear, I fear,
More is design'd, than suited him to say.
Manfredi, too! I'd give the world to see him.
What says his letter?—Thou mysterious slave!

“A Woodman saved me from drowning. I have
“seen what has ruined me.”

Seen what has ruined thee? There's much in this.

“Albanio's camp shall be my court for awhile.”
Albanio's camp? Why sure the man is mad!

“Albanio's camp shall be my court for awhile.
“In which if I succeed ———.” *(Flourish.)*

(Puts up the letter hastily.)

What's this? The king! I tremble at my shadow.

Enter ALFONSO, SCIOLO, and a multitude of Officers.

FONTANO and SCIPIO remain in the back ground.

CLAU. My lord! I joy to see thee thus return'd!
Fontano's treachery—but why frowning thus?
Nay—I entreat thee. Why, alas! thine eye
So wildly rolls on Claudia—had she done
Some monstrous crime, oh! never couldst thou look
More wildly or more frightfully.—Explain.—

*(The King remains silent: Sciolto and Officers
observe Claudia with anxious attention.)*

My lords!—can you expound this mystery?

What have I done to merit these wild frowns?

ALF. Thou hast dissolved, thou traitress, all the ties,
Which bound me to thee! On this spot I vow,
Never to hold communion with thee more.
Nay—speak not; I'll not listen to thy tongue.
Cavallo told me all. I came—I proved—
And found Fontano honest as the day.

CLAU. Alfonso, hear! In spite of all this rant,
I will be heard. 'Tis true! What thou hast heard
Is to the letter true! And as the crime
Is of a nature, that it mocks compare,
I will not stoop t'extenuate. Do thy worst.

ALF. Unhappy Claudia! I blush for thee,
With mingled blushes of reproach and shame.
Within a convent's consecrated walls,
Perchance, thy soul may learn the sacred hope,
Which penitence can give. Sciolto!

SCIOLO.

Lord!

ALF. I charge thee with the ministry of this.

Deep in a valley—near the rocky base

Of yon proud eminence—a convent stands,

Bosom'd in wood. I charge thee to convey

This guilty lady to its cloistered walls.

CLAU. (*Impatiently.*) I am most ready, Signor, to attend thee.

Move on! Since fate ordains it, I submit;

E'en with a willing conscience. Lead the way.

ALF. Claudia, alas! I cannot quit thee thus,

And yet refuse to grant thee my forgiveness.

Would that heaven's pardon were as easy won!

CLAU. And does thine anger, then, subside so soon?

Why is thy face so calm? Thy words so mild?

I like them not. Recall, and give me harsher!

Pour down those epithets, that suit me more;

These words unnerve me, for they wound my pride;

They wound me every way. Oh! curse me! curse me!—

ALF. No! much as thou hast wrong'd me, I'll not wound

Thy guilty feelings more. I can but feel,

That once I lov'd thee with a lover's weakness;

And that though fall'n, degraded, as thou art,

I feel degraded too! So fare—thee—well!

(*Sciolto goes up to Claudia.*)CLAU. (*in an under tone.*) Whither, Sciolto, whither would'st thou lead me?

I'm going a journey, Signor, whither thou

One day wilt journey too. Now lead the way.
I'm not without a friend—a faithful friend,
And which, ere long, shall hide me from myself!

[Exit with Sciolto.]

ALF. Farewell—with that farewell, would I could
lose

All memory of thee! *(A shriek without.)*

What wild shriek was that? Sciolto—Claudia?

Re-enter SCIOLTO bearing CLAUDIA.

SCIOL. She's done a deed, I have no power to tell:
Look on this hand, still grasping firm the dagger.

ALF. What hast thou done, unhappy Claudia?—

Ah!—

Did I not tell thee, I forgave thee all?

Why dost thou, therefore, tempt th' Eternal thus,

And render every hope of his forgiveness,

Still more remote and difficult to gain?

CLAU. Oh!—I have sinned beyond the wish of life;
Beyond the hope of pardon!—Oh Alfonso!

On the dark margin of eternity,

I feel myself a coward. Almighty Father!

Thy mercy is most infinite indeed,

If thou canst pardon such a wretch as I.

ALF. Oh! lay thine head upon this pitying breast.

CLAU. Hide me, oh! hide me:—'twas Fontano's
voice.

Where is thy daughter? She is ruin'd—yes!

Manfredi ruin'd her, and I her father.

Manfredi?—Viper!—Viper!—Viper!—What;

Cavallo too?—Begone!—Oh save me—save me.

(Dies in the arms of Sciolto.)

ALF. Why have I liv'd to such an hour as this?
So rich in wealth, in power, in dignity,
To be thus indigent in happiness,
Is much, too much, for this sad breast to bear!

(Cavallo comes slowly from behind; and, after gazing some little time on Claudia, bursts into tears.)

CAV. How could I wrong my children and myself,
In such a cause as this? Did I not owe
A heavier debt, than I can ever pay,
To them, to injured justice, and to heaven,
I'd not survive thee!—Oh! my dearest babes—
How will ye meet the cruel eyes of scorn,
With which the world will visit ye?—

[Exit.]

ALF. *(To Sciolto.)* Bear her to Naples; give a tear
to weakness:

And on her fate be all for ever silent.

(Attendants exeunt with Claudia.)

FONTANO and SCIPIO come forward.

FON. My liege!

ALF. I thank thee for this sympathy.

Ah—good Fontano—'tis a just decree,
That disappointment, misery, and pain,
Should breathe infection over lawless passion.

FON. Ah!—what a lesson does this scene convey!

—! (*Scipio, seeing Alfonso give way to strong emotion, goes up to him.*)

SCI. Nay—do not sigh, my sovereign lord!

My master says, that every word,

And every sigh, unjustly given,

Are entered in the book of heaven.

And oft I've heard my mother say,

The time will come—oh! blissful day!—

When sighs and tears are wip'd away.

Then do not weep. Let Claudia die;

She was not worth a single sigh!

————— But there is one ———

In yonder wild and rocky grove,

The maiden and her lover rove.

Oh!—do—my sovereign lord, impart

Some comfort to my master's heart!

He ne'er can sleep, till they are found:

Then let us search the woods around:

Come! Let us search each dale and hill;

I, too, can never sleep, until

My noble master's heart is still.

ALF. Surely this earth has never yet beheld
A being like thee!

FON. 'Tis my guardian angel!

SCI. But look, Signor. Who is that, coming hither
so fast, that he seems, as if he were ready to fall at
every step?

Enter CARLO, breathless.

CARLO. The king! the king! which is the king,
Alfonso?

ALF. I am the king!—Thine errand, Signor?—
speak it.

CARLO. Angelo!—Angelina!—They will die!—
 Albano, he has seized them! they will die—
 I can no more.

FON. Oh, gracious heaven; receive me!

[Falls into the arms of Alfonso and Sciolto.

SCI. Oh, my poor master!—Oh, my dearest master.
 [Weeping.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Albanio's Rock. Troops in the back ground.

ALBANIO *walking, to and fro, in great agitation.*

ALB. The world is all my enemy!—
 Untouch'd, unsullied, I was once a MAN:
 Not in the form and symmetry alone,
 But in the heart.—I once could breathe a sigh,
 E'en at the touch of music;—press the hand
 Of proffer'd friendship;—give a toy to children;
 Join in their sports, and coin a smile at will.
 But this curs'd charge has turn'd me to a tiger,
 Without a tiger's reasoning!—I could love—
 And yet I hate mankind. Oh, if the world
 Would shed one tear of pity for my fate,—
 Yes! I could love it still.—But ah, vile thought!
 —But winds are weary of my imprecations!
 Is all prepared?—

SPA.

The youth with bonds is bound.

Enter POLYDORE, leading in MANFREDI, in disguise.

SPA. What, ho!—Who art thou?

MANF. Lead me to thy chief.

(*Aside*) He cannot recognize this tarnished face,
And bending frame.—'Tis twenty years ago—

ALB. (*walking up to him, with a haughty air.*)
Whence didst thou come, and whither wouldst thou
travel?—

What is thine errand?—Art thou friend or foe?

MANF. A friend.

ALB. Whence?

MANF. From Naples.

ALB. Ah?—A friend from Naples?
Jewels from serpents! doves from leopards' dens!
Honey from spiders!—Yet a friend thou may'st be:—
The age of miracles has long since passed:
But it may come again: and thou, perhaps, the
prophet.

Thy name?

MANF. Marcello.

ALB. 'Tis a noble name!

Thine errand?

MANF. Naples is thine own.

ALB. How?—What?—All Naples?—

MANF. Bends beneath thy frown.

ALB. (*blows his bugle; the troops form themselves
into a semicircle, from one side of the stage to the other.*)
Friends, comrades, brothers! here's a noble chief,
Sprung from the loins o' great Marcello, come,
To give a limit to our labours. Speak!—

MANF. All Naples and her sons—

ALB. Speak—speak ye loud,
That all my friends may hear.—I pray you listen.

MANF. I've paved the way: Lord Angelo is banish'd :
Fontano's eyes are withered ; and Alfonso—

ALB. What of the king ?

MANF. He dies by this right hand,
If 'tis Albanio's will.

ALB. And what of Naples ?

MANF. Naples too shall fall.

ALB. Oh, thou'rt a spirit of great power indeed !
Naples shall fall :—But what the instruments ?

MANF. Myself—these treasures,—Yes, the city falls

ALB. (*with an air of piercing investigation.*) By
force or treachery ?

MANF. Which Albanio wills.
These are the keys of Naples.

[*Placing them in Albanio's hand.*]

ALB. Well,—I have them !

Now for Alfonso.

MANF. Here's a poisoned dagger—

ALB. Whose is 't ?

MANF. 'Tis mine.

ALB. And what thy rich reward,
For these important services ?

MANF. Fontano
Now scorns my power ; Cavallo has betrayed me ;
Fontano's daughter has been rescued,
E'en at a time, I thought possession sure.—

ALB. (*impatiently.*) The price—the price ?

MANF. Fontano's head : The head of Angelo :
The gift of Lady Angelina's person.

ALB. Fontano's head ? The head of Angelo ?
The gift of Lady Angelina's person ?—

— Yes! I hate ye —
E'en to the child unborn, ye sons of Naples!
Hate ye to my heart's core! My comrades, mark!
These are the keys of that detested city,
Whose charge against me, ye remember well.
—If Naples is to fall, it shall not fall by me,
If fraud must be the instrument. The dagger!
(*In a half whisper.*) Where is the dagger? (*Manfredi
gives it him.*) Poisoned?—Well! now mark!
Amid the hated sons of hated Naples,
One stands pre-eminent—his name, MANFREDI.
'Tis twenty years since I have seen him; and his visage
Is grown so bloated with the gifts of fortune,
That now I should not know him. To Manfredi,
When thou dost traverse the vast fields of hell,
Arm within arm, I charge thee bear this message.
Tell him, that though I hated him, when living,
As lambs hate wolves, my eager hate to Naples,
Far, far, exceeded all my hate to him.
HE knows me pure; NAPLES believes me guilty.
Tell him, that though I hated both, as hell,
I hated traitors more. Thy lips are traitor's lips!

MANF. — (*drawing a dagger, secretly, from under his
robe.*) 'Tis well I steep'd two daggers in the poison!
My plan, then, suits thee not?—Return my dagger,
And give me back my keys.

ALB. — Impudent slave!
Return a poison'd dagger to a fiend,
Who has presum'd to take me for a brother!
Did I not scorn to touch a thing, so mean,
So abject, and unutterably vile, I would—

[*Turning from him with contempt.*]

MANF. (*aside.*) I slew thy wife—and now I'll ruin thee!

My heart has loath'd thee from that hour, accurs'd,
In which thy wife first froze me with a look
Of silent scorn ;—then gave her charms to thee.
Give me, Albano, give me back my dagger.

ALB. Daggers to traitors! Am I wanting here?

[*Putting his finger on his forehead.*]

I hate thee, reptile, for thine insolence.

MANF. It is mine own ; I claim it as mine own.

[*Albanio waves his hand as a negative. Manfredi softly approaches him, and is about to stab him in the back ; when Albanio turns suddenly upon him, wrests the dagger, and stabs him to the heart.*]

MANF. May earthquakes swallow thee!—

ALB. Now let the poison travel through thy veins,
Palsy thy nerves, and melt into thy marrow!—

MANF. Fiend—Fiend of fortune! thou hast slain
Manfredi!

ALB. (*Looking at him, as if he distrusted his own evidence.*)

No!—I'll not trust the evidence of sight!—

Manfredi?—'tis impossible!—the fiend

At Naples is.—And yet that lowering eye,

Arch'd with malignant wrinkles, never can

Deform another face than his.—It is—it is—

[*With savage ecstasy.*]

It is Manfredi ;—'tis Manfredi's self!—

TROOP. Manfredi?

ALB. Yes!—Manfredi!—

Now may yon sky rain daggers if it will.—

SPAL. Leave him to us, Signor, leave him to us.—

[*Manfredi falls.*—

ALB. See ! how the poison operates upon him !

Die, traitor, die ; and take thy flight to hell.—

Look down, Francisca, I've reveng'd thy cause.

Now for mine own !—The hated youth shall die,

Since he believes me guilty like the rest.

Murder my wife ?—My soul ! my soul ! my soul !

Ha ! what a vile, detested, miscreant, race,

To credit such a tale !—Bear out the fiend ;

And let his limbs so poison all the air,

That wolves and kites may die, while gorging on his
body.

[*They bear out the body of Manfredi.*

(*To Spalatro, in a half whisper.*)—What think ye now ?

Dost think my mind diseas'd ?

SPAL. He, that thinks that, deserves the name for
folly.—

ALB. Ye mighty powers !———

Why hast thou humbled thus my towering pride ?

What ? Have ye made me, only to be victim

To the vile craft of such a fiend as this ?—

A wretch so low, that, wearing human form,

Makes me to loathe the figure of a man.

Oh ! Fortune !—arrogant and insolent !—

This is too much.—But I'll revenge my cause :

And turn this insult on the towers of Naples.

(*He walks about in a disordered manner.*—

*Troops are seen leading Angelo to the edge of
a rock, and stand prepared to hurl him into
the sea.*)

SOLDIER.—All is now ready, Signor.

POLY. Signor!—

SPAL. Peace!—He's disorder'd.—See ye how he smiles?

I never saw him smile e'en once before!

Signor, the youth of Naples is before you!

ALB. (*Starting.*) Where?

ANG. (*With a loud voice.*) Here!—

ALB. Godlike in form, but demon in thy speech!

Demon! to charge me with Francisca's murder.

(*To Spalatro.*) Charg'd he not so?—Truth blushes 'mid thy frowns.—

He did! He did! He is Manfredi's brother.

ANGELI. (*Without.*) Where is Albanio?—tell me where he is!

ANG. Eternal Heav'n!—I feel a thousand pangs In every moment, I'm allow'd to live!—

[ANGELINA rushes in, in a wild and distracted manner.

ANGELI. Where is Albanio?—Is Albanio here?

(*Seeing Albanio she stops, and assumes an air of dignity.*)

And canst thou, dreadful minister of wrath,

Dar'st thou thus tamper with the lives of men?

Hast thou no dread of that avenging spirit,

That on the whirlwind of the frozen North,

Rides through the welkin of this lower world,

And hurls destruction on the tyrant's head?—

ALB. No!—I have not. I fear no powers of earth,

Nor powers of air.—I scorn them all, but one:

And she has strung these sinews for REVENGE.—

Begone!—nor tempt me farther; lest thy pride

Brings on thy ruin too.—Begone!—Begone!
Francisca's spirit loudly cries "REVENGE!"

SPAL. Lady!—Permit me;—yonder is Marcella.—

ANGELI. Signor! Stand off.—I am no woman now.
Wrongs have unsexed me. Hear thou MAN OF BLOOD!
Hear, whilst you may! And let these purple veins
Glut, if you will, the measure of your thirst:
But spare that noble victim, lest the might
Of some avenging God should seal thy ruin.

ALB. Ruin? Away!—Ruin and I are brothers.
Hurl him, ye frantic idiots, to the shore.
Why do ye pause? I charge ye, hurl him down.
Would all the sons of Naples too were here,
That ye might hurl them to one common grave;
The grave of hatred, vengeance, and despair.
Then I could die, with ectasy, to-morrow!

ANGELI. Stay—stay yon hands! I charge ye
pause to hear.

Heaven ne'er will spare you, if ye spare not him.
Forbear—forbear.—Albanio! dost thou know,
That yonder youth is Nature's noblest son?
—Shouldst' thou wound him! —

The great Eternal will avenge his cause,
And heap more woes, and ruin on thine head,
Than ever fell to one man's lot before!

ALB. Sure 'tis some spirit, that appals me thus!
A voice from heaven!—I have oft times heard,
That injured virtue has the power to call
An angel's spirit, from the gates of heaven.

ANGELI. Let not thy passions tempt thee on to ruin!
This hour—this fatal hour—alone is thine:

The next may lead thee to eternity :
 And, in that dread eternity, what woes,
 What woes unheard—unthought of—may assail thee.

ALB. Lady !—An oath most solemn is, and sacred.
 I would not break one for an Indian mine,
 Teeming with emeralds and sapphires.—

ANGELI. ————— Ah !

But Heaven, I'm sure, would pardon such an act :
 Since, now to do it, constitutes a virtue.—

ALB. Did he not say, that I had stabb'd my Wife ?
 Could he stab thee ?—could he, at midnight hour,
 Have struck the bosom, that he rested on,
 And turn its snow to crimson ?—Out !—The charge
 Is second only to the deed itself.—

ANGELI. Is the charge false ?—I've heard it from my
 childhood.—

ALB. Just Heaven ! she drives me frantic :—Is it true ?
 Look on this hand ! see'st blood upon it ?—Speak.
 When a man stabs, this is the fatal hand,
 With which he does the deed.—See ye ought there ?

ANG. 'Tis white as snow !

ALB. I charge thee, look again.—
 Not all the waters of the Atlantic waste
 Could e'er have wash'd the bloody stains away, *
 Had it but once been sullied with this deed.
 —But what ?—what wild and sacred vision's this ?
 An angel minist'ring !—Francisca's form !

* Although the waves of all the northern sea
 Should flow for ages through thy guilty hands,
 Yet the sanguinolent stain would extant be.

List—how rich music floats amid the spheres :—

Angel of love!—I kneel to hear thine errand. (*Kneels.*)

So soon to leave me! — Oh!—thou martyr'd angel!

See—how she floats upon the balmy air; (*rises.*)

Rising to heaven, mid pyramids of rubies!—

ANGELI. Oh! let thy wife speak volumes, then,
for me.—

Spare him—oh! spare him —

ALB. Polydore!—My soul—

My soul seems starting to a new existence.

ANGELI. May he then live?

ALB. Oh! what is life to me?

Yes! he may live, for ages, if he will :

And so may all that breathe;—so that Albanio dies!

ANGELI. Oh! heaven—I thank thee.—Angelo—
my love!—

Thou'rt free!—thou liv'st!—I fly to loose thy chains.

[*Flies to Angelo's rock.*

(*A confused noise of distant trumpets, and a
clang of arms.*)

ALB. What means this clang of arms?

[*Appears, for a short time, as if stupified; then
suddenly resumes all his energy.*

————— To arms!—to arms! —————

Unsheath your swords, and shew, that ye are men!—

It is our enemy from Naples.——Charge!—

He has surpriz'd us in our secret haunts.

To arms!—to arms!—It is Albanio calls ye!

[*Enter ALFONSO and SCIOLTO, at the head of the Neapolitan troops.—A battle ensues.—ALBANIO throws
himself into the thickest of the battle; but receiving*

a wound, and finding himself unable to make head against the assailants, he rushes forward, and throws his sword at the feet of ALFONSO.—SILENCE immediately ensues.

ALB. Alfonso, thou hast conquered!
Firm is thine arm, most prudent thy resolves,
And all thy plans matur'd.—I've hurl'd my sword—
To save my Comrades' blood! HUNDREDS must yield
To well appointed THOUSANDS!

[After struggling with his pride, some little time, he adds in a subdued manner;

I would ask
One favour of thee, e'er I pay the price
Of misdirected vengeance.

ALF. Speak!

ALB. My comrades—

I won them from thee!—Let the penalty
Rest then on me.—Restore them to their country.

ALF. *(After a pause.)* The boon is granted.

ALB. I return thee thanks.

Now then my life wanes swiftly to its close.—

Oh! What a dream of horror have I past!—

My mind has long been withering!—But I feel,

I feel,—alas!—too late,—that I have sinn'd,

Beyond the common measure of a crime,

To let mine anger take a range so wide.

But if I've sinn'd—Thou, also, hast transgress'd:

Witness the wise Fontano!—since

ANGELI. *(Rushing from behind.)* My father!

Tell me, oh tell me, where my father travels.—

FON. (*coming from the opposite side of the stage.*)

Oh heaven! I die with gratitude and joy.

It is my daughter. 'Tis my daughter's voice!

ANG. Can this be possible?

ANGELI. Ye mighty powers!

It is,—it is,—it is, indeed, my father!

[*Falls into Fontano's arms.*]

FONT. My daughter! daughter! oh! my dearest daughter!

ALB. Fontano?—Angelo?—Fontano's daughter?—

Oh!—What a crime have I escaped! my mind—

My eyes seem clouded:—And my heart is broken!—

(*Suddenly pulls off his military dress: a tattered robe appears beneath.*)

Know ye this robe?

Alas!—ye know it not.

It is the robe in which I fled from Naples.

Ye men of Naples—ye've accused me long

Of murder;—foulest murder,—of my wife!

[*To Angelina in a frantic whisper.*]

Yes! of my wife!—my martyr'd angel wife!

That is the charge, that has unmann'd me; stay!

Was not that cruel charge—oh! lady—lady,

Pity my ruin'd intellect.—The moon—

See—how she rides triumphant;—like the fair,

The gentle angel, that Albanio loves.—

Nay—do not shrink, as if I were a monster!

I will not, cannot, harm thee!

All believe me guilty!—

Yes—they believe me guilty even now!

Fiend of the soul!—thy rage seems fell and endless.—

See! see! again—my angel! yes! the dagger
Still rends thy heart, and reddens all thy bosom.

[Retreating towards the rock.]

Away! let no one interrupt me—hence—away!
Death is to me a paradise!—away!—

[Arrived at the precipice.]

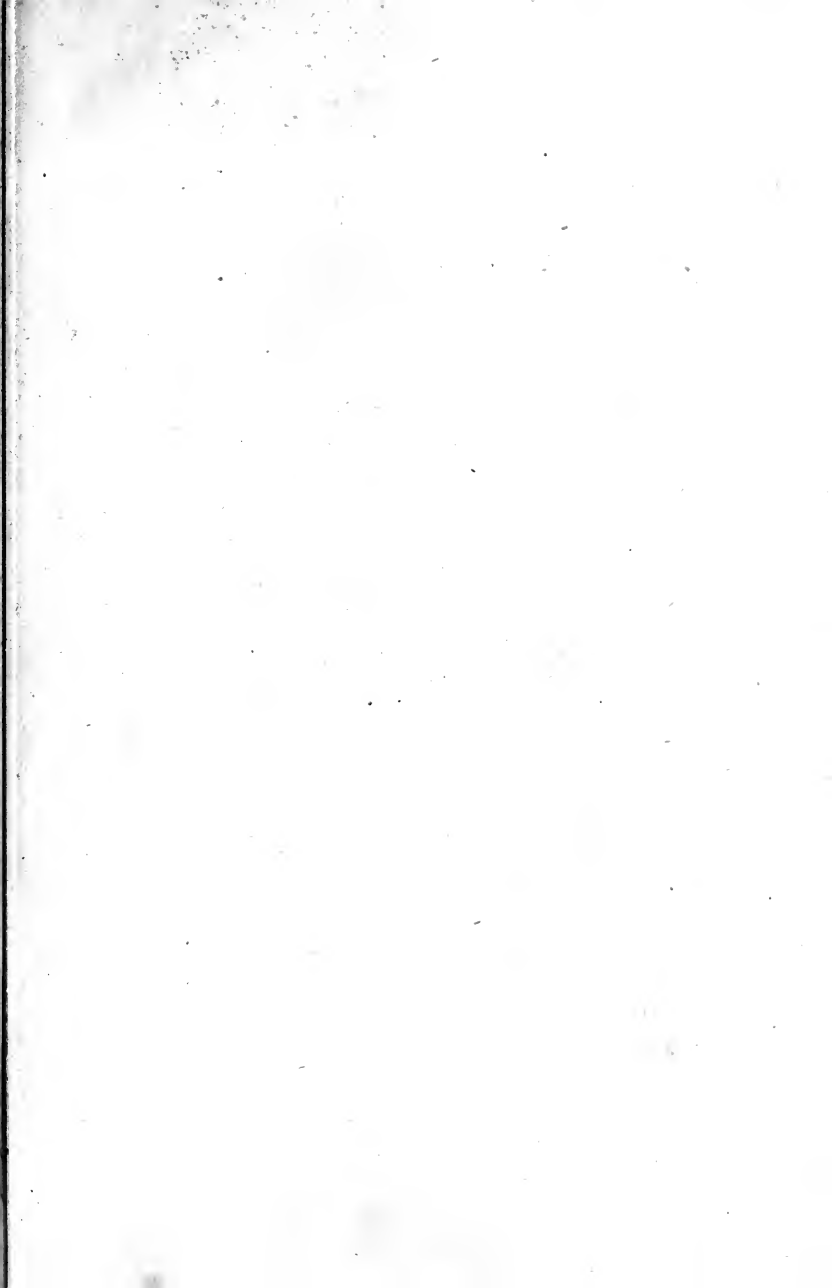
If INNOCENT to HEAVEN!—If GUILTY down to HELL.

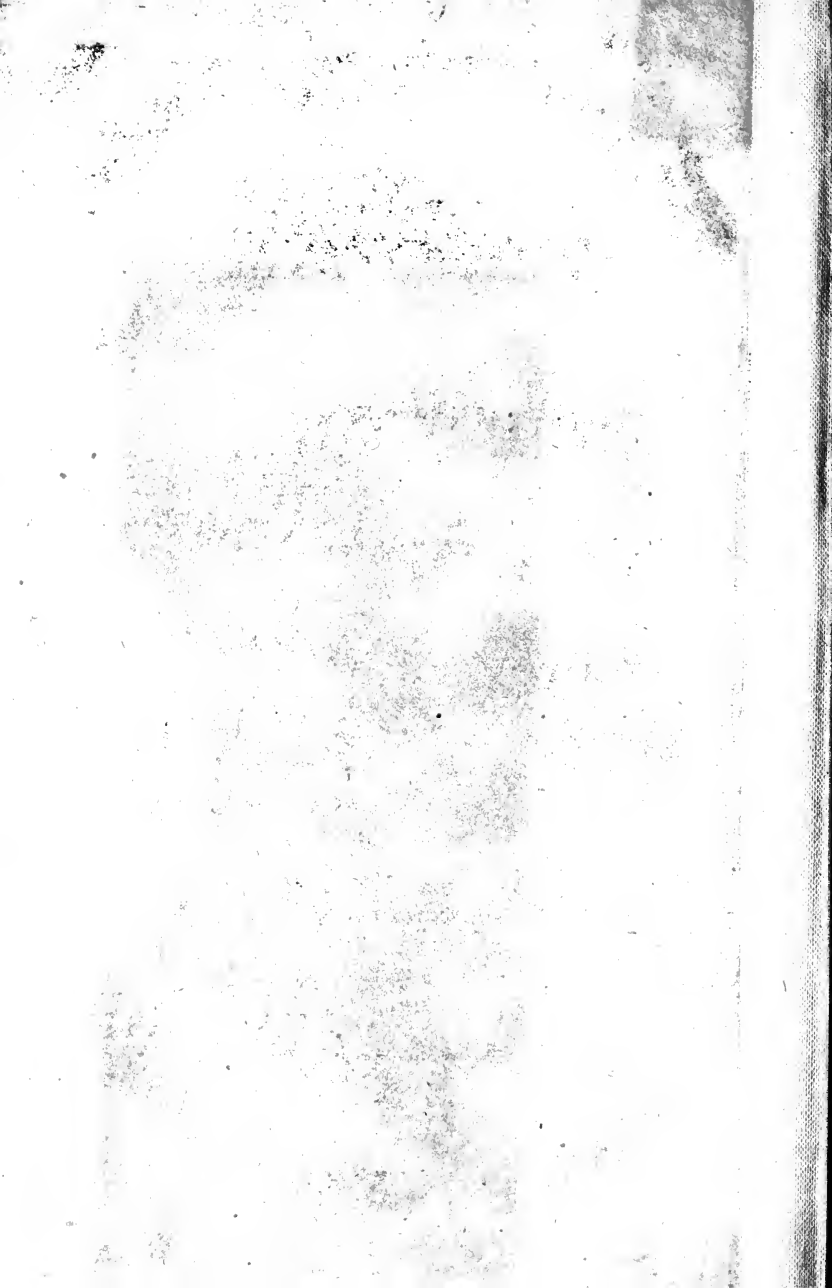
I hear thee, Martyr!—Yes—I come—I come!

Now for life's masterpiece!

*[Stabs himself, and falls from the
precipice into the SEA beneath.]*

THE END.





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